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AMATSUKI

by TAKAYAMA Shinobu

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Amatsuki v16 c95

Credits

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おまつり
16
高山しのぶ
SHINOBU TAKAYAMA

昔者莊周夢為
自喻適志与。
不知周也。俄而覚、則
不知、周之夢為胡蝶与
周与胡蝶、則又
胡蝶
周也。
胡蝶之夢為
謂物化

AMATSUKI 16

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Amutsuki #6
Mamoru Takayama

人物紹介

六合鴇時：柔軟な性格の高校生。帝天の定めた運命「天綱」を書き換える力を持つ「白紙の者」でもある。銀朱の記憶を垣間見たことで、この世界の成り立ちを知った。

篠ノ女紺：こちらに迷い込んだ鴇時の同級生。初代「白紙の者」。その記憶は帝天に消されたと思われていたが？

梵天：妖の頂的存在。帝天に逆らい、天綱を読み解く力を奪われた。ただの妖となりながらも、鴇時と行動を共にする。

保科：人間でありながら、梵天率いる天座の一員でもある。なりゆきで鴇時を弟分扱いしている。

空五倍子：梵天によって作られた妖。仮面が割れ、彼岸での鴇時の知り合い、半の記憶を取り戻す。

鵺：陰陽寮に所属する医者。常に冷静だが、陰陽寮の裏稼業のことを尋常でなく慕っている。

胡蝶：坂守神社に勤める坊主の一人。鴇い方で篠ノ女と知り合う。元は武家三男坊で真面目な性格。

あらすじ

最先端のCG技術で江戸の町を再現した大江戸幕末巡回展。そこを訪れた鴇時は、妖・夜行と鵺に襲われ、幕末の江戸に良く似た異世界に迷い込んでしまった。

白紙の者の力故に、帝天と戦う妖と人の双方から助力を求められた鴇時は、どちらも選ばないことを選んだ。その結果、独力で帝天に挑んだ集団は存在を塗り換えられ、今までに関わった人々の記憶までも書き換えられてしまう。憤った鴇時は、帝天に対抗すべく奔走し、人（神社・陰陽寮）と妖（梵天ら天座）を結び付けるところまで漕ぎ着ける。しかしその矢先、夜行と配下の妖に襲われ、朽葉、真朱、「本当の銀朱の体」が夜行の罠にさらわれてしまう。

そんな折、江戸城天守閣が闇に包まれる。鴇時達は急ぎ江戸城に乗り込むが、敵の妖の轟轟により、危地に空五倍子の仮面が割れ、彼の顔が鴇時の彼岸での知り合い、半であると判明。そして鴇時は、あまつきと彼岸の関係に気付き始める。空五倍子や露草らと一端別れ、鴇時は陰陽寮達と合流する。姿を消した萱草の後を追い、大神憑きを祓おうとしている村に着くが、それは萱草の具現化した願望だった。過去と決別した萱草により、その世界が閉じられようというとき、はぐれていた紺は、もう一人の自分と出会っていた。

NOTE: IN JAPANESE FLOWER LANGUAGE, BUSH CLOVER SYMBOLIZES "REFLECTION" AND "FLEXIBILITY OF THE SPIRIT"

CHAPTER 95:
BUSH CLOVER IN BLOOM

WHAT..?
HOW..?
I DON'T..
WHAT WAS IT THAT BONTEN SAID?
"DOPPLE"-SOMETHING
...
MAYBE HE'S ONE OF THOSE...
NO..
OR MAYBE HE'S ONE OF THAT MIRROR DEMON'S CREATIONS...

I DON'T THINK HE'S ANYTHING LIKE THAT..
DAMN IT...
BUT THEN..
SORRY, DUDE.
STEP
GASP
IF IT WEREN'T FOR THAT STUPID TEACHER AND THAT ANNOYING GIRL, I WOULDN'T HAVE LOST SO MUCH TIME...
WHO IS HE?!
WHAT A PAIN... WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO NOW?

I NEED...
TO SEE YOUR MEMO-RIES.
WHAT.
IS HE?!

AH
HH
HH!?
AH!
AHH
HH!!
RELAX, CHILL OUT! I AIN'T GONNA HURT YOU!
IT DOESN'T EVEN HURT!
HM.
I
I
HUH
LOOKS LIKE YOU AND TOKI ARE TIGHT NOW...
WOW...
HUFF
HUFF
?

HAHA, YOU EVEN MADE HIS LUNCHES?
YOU'RE SUCH A HOUSE-WIFE.
HUH?
DUDE, YOU WORKED TOGETHER WITH BOTH THE BUREAU OF DIVINATION AND HEAVEN'S SEAT? THAT'S PRETTY HARDCORE!!
AND IT LOOKS LIKE TOKI'S GOTTEN PRETTY GOOD AT USING HIS POWERS...
THE SHOGUN GOT KIDNAPPED BY THE YAKOU...
WHOA, KUCHIHA TOO?
OH, SO YOU FIGURED OUT THE WHITE SNAKE...
DAMN, YOU GUYS HAVE SEEN SOME SHIT, HUH?
THIS HAS TO BE A NIGHT-MARE...
HE ISN'T ME!
BUT...
IT'S LIKE...
HE'S READ-ING MY MEMO-RIES...
IT'S LIKE...

HE'S STEALING...

MY MEMORIES...

I'M GOING TO...
PUT YOU BACK THE WAY YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE.
SO JUST CHILL OUT.
RELAX, OKAY?
...WELL, SHIT, I MEAN, I'M STILL CAUSING YOU A LOT OF PROBLEMS
Toki too
...OKAY, I GET IT NOW
SORRY, BRO. IT LOOKS LIKE I'VE CAUSED YOU A LOT OF PROBLEMS

WHO AM I?
BUT THEN...
PUT ME BACK...?!
WHAT AM I?!
GRAB
HUH?!
AHHHHHH

GAH!!
PULL
OH!! WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU DOING?!
THAT'S MY LINE!!

YOU'RE ONE OF THAT MIRROR DEMON'S ILLUSIONS AREN'T YOU?!
WELL YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN NOW BUDDY AND I'M NOT FALLING FOR THAT SHIT TWICE!!
HUH?
..OKAY, OKAY, I GET IT
IS THAT WHAT YOU THINK?
DAMN IT, THIS SUCKS, BUT LET ME TRY TO EXPLAIN.
YOU MIGHT THINK YOU'RE ME, BECAUSE YOU WERE MADE TO LOOK LIKE ME, BUT YOU'RE NOT.
COME ON.
I KNOW YOU REMEMBER WHO YOU REALLY ARE.
DEEP DOWN –
YOU KNOW WHO YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE.
KOSEN.

EH?!
KOSEN...?
YOU WERE I MET THAT KID... AT THE SHRINE.
OH, DID YOU FINISH CLEANING KUCHIHA'S ROOM?
YOU MET KUCHIHA, TOO
YOU WERE REALLY GOOD AT COOKING
FROM WHAT I COULD TELL, YOU SEEMED LIKE A SMART AND CAPABLE GUY
I'M THE THIRD SON OF KINOMOTO MASAHARU
YOU'RE IN THE WAY
I WANTED TO SEE THE MONK WHO PEOPLE SAY IS TOUGH
YOUR MEMORIES... WERE TAKEN OUT OF YOUR BODY,
AND COPIED INTO MINE
FUFU
YOU'RE STILL NEW HERE, AREN'T YOU?
SO THAT... ISN'T YOUR ACTUAL BODY.

呪い…
RIGHT NOW,
YOUR BODY..
馬鹿な！
IS BEING REUSED AS ONE OF THE SHRINE GUARD NPCS.
I WAS AT THE SHRINE WHEN IT HAPPENED...
TEITEN SAW ME,
AND LOOKED THROUGH ALL OF MY MEMORIES
MY GUESS IS THAT TEITEN NABBED YOUR MEMORIES WHILE YOU WERE CHECKING ON THE BIG DISTURBANCE AT THE SHRINE.
AND SO THAT'S WHAT PROBABLY HAPPENED.
WHO...
ARE YOU?
AND THEN WHEN YOU LEFT THE SHRINE,
STEP
TEITEN VANISHED..
HEY!
OWWW!!
LOOK YOU ASSHOLE! IF YOU'RE 'ME' THEN HOW IS IT THAT YOU CAN MOVE YOUR LEFT ARM?!
SHOCK
QUIT SPEAKING ON MY BEHALF!

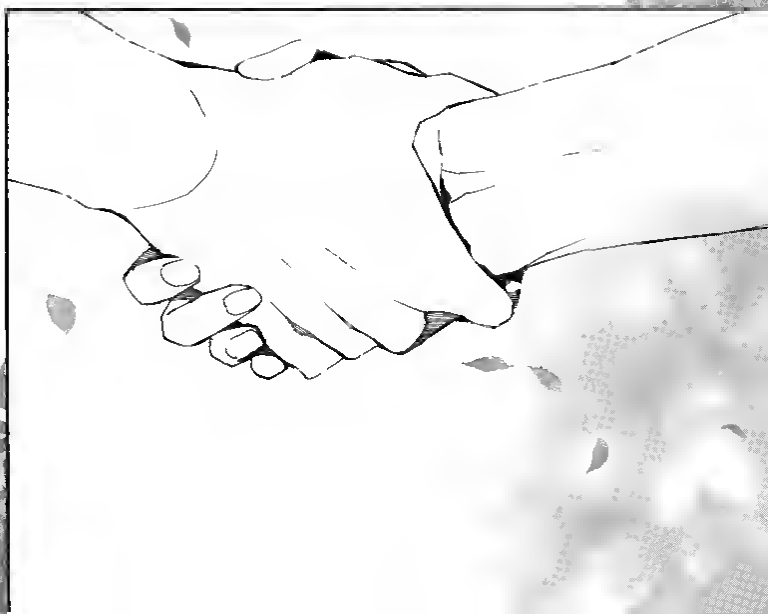
GASP
GASP
YOU...
CAN MOVE YOUR LEFT ARM?
UGH
OW...
DAMN IT...
COME ON!
GET OFF A ME!
HEY!
LET ME GOOO!

AHHHHHHHHH!!
!?
I THOUGHT I HEARD...
A VOICE...
WHAT'S WRONG??
ugh
DASH
HEY!
BONTEN COME ON!
WHAT IF IT'S KOH?!

IT WAS YOU!
OH!
KON!
TREMBLE
HUFF
HUFF
!
WHOA, WHAT'S WRONG?!
YOU'RE REALLY PALE...
!
.....
FLINCH
HUH?
OMG!
DID YOU GET ATTACKED BY AN AYAKASHI?!
ARE YOU HURT?!
GASP
OH CRAP
ARE THEY STILL HERE?

SHAKE
...ARE YOU OKAY?
OH...
WHEW...
THANK GOOD-NESS...
THIS FOREST IS PRETTY BIG!
IT'S A GOOD THING I FOUND YOU!
lucky!
SO DON'T WORRY, ALL RIGHT?
WE'RE TOGE-THER NOW, SO EVERY-THING'S GOING TO BE OKAY!!
NO... YOU THINK YOU ARE TOGETH-ER, BUT
I'M NOT YOUR "KON..."
CHOKE

...HUH?
WHAT'S WRONG?
WE'LL TALK LATER OKAY?
COME ON!
GRAB
EEP!
CRAP!
HEY!
CRASH
DON'T JUST RUN OFF! THE FOREST IS ON FIRE DUMBASS!
COME ON!
WAH SORRY KOH!! WE'VE GOT TO GO BEFORE WE GET COOKED!!
BUT...
UM...



RUB
RUB
SHIT
HE GOT AWAY..
AND THAT IDIOT TOKI..
HE NEEDS TO LEARN TO MIND HIS OWN BUSINESS..
I CAN'T BELIEVE I GOT MY ASS KICKED BY MY OWN CLONE
SIGH
...DAMN IT, I WAS NOT EXPECTING THIS AT ALL.
BUT I GUESS IT'S THE POWER OF THE UNWRITTEN PAGE... HE MAKES ILLUSIONS REAL.
"AMATSUKI" WAS DESIGNED TO FOLLOW A SET PLOT,
BUT NOW...
IT'S ALL BEING DIRECTED BY HIS UNCONSCIOUS MIND, AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT KIND OF ENDING HE WANTS.
I DON'T KNOW HOW HE'S CHANGING "AMATSUKI"

IN THE BEGINNING THE CHANGES WERE SMALL.
BUT THEN, THE ERRORS STARTED PILING UP
AND NOW, THIS UNCERTAIN FUTURE...
HIS DECISIONS MIGHT REST ON

NOTE: HE'S REFERRING TO THE CIVIL WAR THAT BEGAN AROUND THE TIME OF THE DEATH OF SHOGUN TOKUGAWA IENOCHI, AND LEAD TO THE END OF THE EDO PERIOD. SAMURAI FROM THE SOUTHERN REGION OF CHOUSHUU HAD ALWAYS FELT UNFAIRLY OPPRESSED BY THE TOKUGAWA REGIME. SO IN THE MID-1860S THERE WERE SEVERAL ARMED REBELLIONS. THE SHOGUN'S FORCES ATTEMPTED TO SUPPRESS THE UPRISINGS, BUT BY THAT POINT, THE GOVERNMENT'S POWER WAS ALREADY WEAKENING.

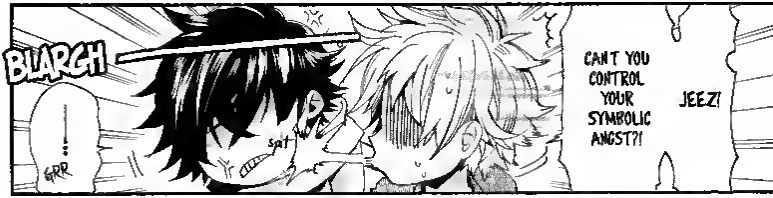
NOTE: HE'S SPEAKING THE DEATH POEM OF THE 17TH CENTURY SAMURAI AND POLITICAL ACTIVIST TAKASUGI SHINSAKU, WHO WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN DEFEATING THE SHOGUNATE. HE WAS ALSO A SKILLED POET AND CALLIGRAPHER. HIS DEATH POEM READS: "I WANT TO DIE AFTER ACHIEVING A GLORIOUS VICTORY OVER THE NUMEROUS ENEMY." A TOKUGAWA ARMY, WHICH DEALT A MAJOR PSYCHOLOGICAL BLOW TO THE ENEMY'S STABILITY. HOWEVER, TAKASUGI NEVER LIVED TO SEE HIS REVOLUTION SUCCEED — HE DIED IN 1867, AT THE AGE OF 28. (FROM TONGERUOLIPEDIA.)

QUICK!
CROSS THE BRIDGE!
THERE THEY ARE!
RUSTLE
whoooosh

AT LEAST IT LOOKS LIKE THE FIRE IS GOING TO STOP AT THE EDGE OF THAT CLIFF...
IT'S LIKE THE CLIFF SEPARATES THAT PLACE FROM THE REST OF THE WORLD

WHAT?!
SO THE WHOLE MOUNTAIN IS ON FIRE BECAUSE OF THIS JERK?! SERIOUSLY?!
GRT
.....
GLARE

WELL, THAT FIRE IS SORT OF SYMBOLICALLY BURNING AWAY KANZOU'S PAST, AS IF IT'S FUELED BY HIS SOUL ITSELF, SO...
IT'S PROBABLY NOT POSSIBLE TO STOP IT
AND NOW THAT THE SPIRITUAL POWER OF THE CLAM DEMON IS GONE...


BLARGH!
SAT
GRR
CAN'T YOU CONTROL YOUR SYMBOLIC ANGST?!
JEEZ!

LAUGH
AND NOW...
IT'S TIME TO GO BACK, ISN'T IT...?
LAUGH

O HO HO HO~
GIGGLE
YOU DUMBASS!!

...HM?
OH MY...
IT'S AS IF...
SOMETHING ABOUT YOU IS DIFFERENT...
HUH?
KON?
What's wrong?!
UGH
HIDE

HEY!
COME ON, LET'S GO
OH!
RIGHT!
WE'VE GOT TO MEET BACK UP WITH TSUYU-KUSA AND THE REST!
HMPH, AS IF I WANT TO BE STUCK WITH THAT IRRITATING BRAT AGAIN.
HA HA HA!
DON'T WORRY, IT WILL BE FINE! WE'VE ALREADY FACED OUR INNER DEMONS, RIGHT?

SO I FEEL LIKE...
UNDER-STAND EACH OTHER BETTER NOW!

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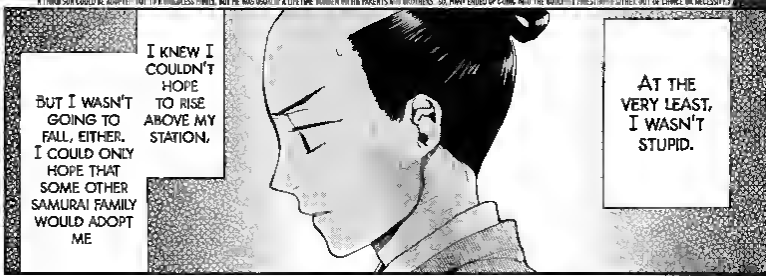
MY LIFE HAS ALWAYS BEEN BORING.

CHAPTER 96: INTERLUDE ~ KOSEN

I WAS BORN A THIRD SON...
TO A MID-RANKING SAMURAI FAMILY.
MY FAMILY WAS POLITICALLY UNIMPORTANT,
SO NO ONE CARED IF THE THIRD SON SPENT ALL OF HIS TIME IN HIS ROOM.

*1/n. IN THE EDO PERIOD, THE LAW OF PRIMOGENITURE DICTATED THAT THE FIRST SON WOULD INHERIT HIS FAMILY'S WEALTH AND STATUS. A SECOND SON MIGHT GET INTO A MARTIAL ARTS TEACHING OR SHRINE ATTACHED "RESPECTABLE" PROFESSION, BUT A THIRD SON WAS GENERALLY USELESS. IT WAS CONSIDERED "DISHONORABLE" FOR A MAN OF SAMURAI RANK, EVEN A LOWLY THIRD SON, TO WORK AS A FARMER OR AS A MERCHANT, BUT SINCE THE EDO PERIOD WAS SO PEACEFUL, THERE WAS LITTLE NEED FOR SAMURAI AS SOLDIERS. A THIRD SON COULD BE ADOPTED INTO A CHILDLESS FAMILY, BUT HE WAS USUALLY A LIFETIME BURDEN ON HIS PARENTS AND BROTHERS. SO, MANY ENDED UP GOING INTO THE BUDDHIST PRIESTHOOD EITHER OUT OF CHOICE OR NECESSITY.)


BUT I WASN'T GOING TO FALL, EITHER. I COULD ONLY HOPE THAT SOME OTHER SAMURAI FAMILY WOULD ADOPT ME
I KNEW I COULDN'T HOPE TO RISE ABOVE MY STATION.
AT THE VERY LEAST, I WASN'T STUPID.

My oldest brother was carefree, and he never bothered with studying.
But people seemed naturally drawn to him anyway.
My second brother was quiet and serious. He was a genius who did nothing but practice his swordsmanship.
He planned to become a fencing instructor.
As for me, if I had a special skill, it would have been my education...
I thought I was exceptionally intelligent.
But I was probably just average.
I was never special...
I was just a third son.
And that was all I'd ever be.
BUZZ
BUZZ
TURN
BUZZ
BUZZ

NICE WEATHER TODAY, HUH?
HEY, HAVE YOU SEEN SABUROU?
Hey!
HE'S IN HIS ROOM AS USUAL, STUDYING BUDDHIST TEXTS OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT
EWW...
TOO SERIOUS FOR ME.
THAT'S RIGHT!
BUZZ
BUZZ
BUZZ
BUZZ
BUZZ
BUZZ

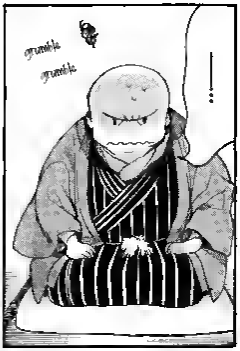
Note: The text he's reading refers to the six Buddhist hells in which living beings are trapped.

TREMBLE
SILENCE
AND SO, I DISCOVERED MY SPECIAL TALENT.
I DIDN'T NEED TO STUDY..
.....
GASP
GASP
GAH!

I'd been born with eyes that let me see things that were invisible to the rest of the world.
sob
sob
sob
sob
Come on,
How many times do I have to tell you?
You need to keep a strong heart.
Saburou-dono.
If others see you as weak, they'll use you.
If you aren't strong,
You'll be taken advantage of.
In this world, the strong survive...
whisper
I...
whisper
I feel like I'm half dead already
whisper
Even the demons won't leave me alone...

I...
I DON'T CARE.

...!
IF YOU LET YOURSELF THINK LIKE THAT,
THIS IS TERRIBLE!
WON'T YOU BE TAKEN AWAY BY THEM?!


grumble grumble
...!

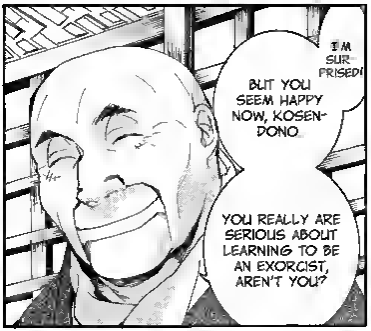
SABUROUPONO,

YOU COULD AT LEAST LEARN TO DEFEND YOURSELF FROM THESE THINGS.
I CERTAINLY WOULDN'T PRESUME TO INFLUENCE A MEMBER OF THE SAMURAI CLASS,
BUT HAVE YOU EVER CONSIDERED BECOMING A PRIEST?

All of a sudden, it was like my whole world opened up.
My parents tried to stop me, but I refused to listen
A temple..? Are you insane?!
How could you leave the Kinomoto family?!
Saburo!
What are you thinking?!
I've already made up my mind!!
I cut off ties with my brothers
What's this you're saying about seeing demons? That's ridiculous!
How can you be so irresponsible!? Grow up!
Just wait and father will arrange for you to marry into a good family!
slash
This...
This is my decision!
.....
You..
I...
I'm not... like you!

Note: The paper in the background is Kosen's letter of introduction with his new name.
SUDDENLY, MY BODY FELT LIGHT WITH JOY.
I CUT OFF MY FAMILY.
I CUT OFF MY HAIR.
I'M ME!
I'M SPECIAL, TOO!
I DON'T HAVE TO LIVE IN THE SHADOW OF MY BROTHERS!
I CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD!

I'VE HEARD ABOUT A PLACE WHERE THEY SPECIALIZE IN DEMONOLOGY.
SO COULD YOU PLEASE WRITE ME A LETTER OF RECOMMEN-DATION?
Y..
YES!
ABSO-LUTELY!


I'M SUR-PRISED!
BUT YOU SEEM HAPPY NOW, KOSEN-DONO.
YOU REALLY ARE SERIOUS ABOUT LEARNING TO BE AN EXORCIST, AREN'T YOU?

AND SO I MET SHAMON, THAT SINFUL PRIEST.
AND I CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF THAT GIRL HE HAD WITH HIM, THE ONE WHO'D BEEN POSSESSED BY A DOG SPIRIT
I HEAR THAT YOU'RE A SMART KID WITH A TALENT FOR COOKING, SO WE'D BE GLAD TO HAVE YA!
SO, YOU WANNA LEARN HOW TO EXORCISE DEMONS, HUH? WELL, YOU'VE COME TO THE RIGHT PLACE!
YOU HAVE THE SKILLS.. AND LITTLE BY LITTLE, YOU'RE GROWING UP
YOU AREN'T WORTHLESS
NEVER FORGET THAT YOU HAVE VALUE.
OH, AND ONE MORE THING -
NO MATTER WHAT OTHERS MAY SAY,
AND NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, YOU CAN ALWAYS COME HOME

KON.
SHINO-NOME
KON.
IT'S RUDE TO GO MAKING INSINUATIONS ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE'S FAMILY SITUATIONS
YOU'RE THAT SKETCHY-LOOKING OUTSIDER THAT SHAMON-DONO TOOK IN, AREN'T YOU?
HEY~
HEH, NICE TO MEET YOU, TOO
YOU HAVE A SURNAME, RIGHT - ARE YOU FROM A NOBLE FAMILY?
WELL, SORT OF
I GUESS YOU COULD SAY THAT
HEH... AND NOW YOU'RE DOING CHORES IN A SHRINE? DID YOUR FAMILY GO BROKE?
UM...
K...
hahahaha
ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU'RE JUST A THIRD SON WHO DECIDED TO BECOME A PRIEST, YOU KNOW?
I'M JUST SAY-ING
HMPH, I GUESS
BUT YOU'RE STILL ONE TO TALK...
TWITCH
WAIT.

WHO ARE YOU?
WHO...
HOW.
I NEVER TOLD ANYBODY WHERE I WAS FROM!
HOW DID YOU KNOW ABOUT MY PAST?
HUH?
BE-CAUSE I'M YOU.
I KNOW...
..WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

?!
WHAT?!
YOU'RE NOT ME!!
I'M ME!
WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY?!
...
SUDDENLY, IT WAS LIKE I COULD SEE MY LIFE FLASHING BEFORE MY EYES, BUT ALL OF MY MEMORIES OF MYSELF WERE BEING REWRITTEN WITH HIS FACE.
WHAT'S HAPPENING..?!
I...
...!
THERE, THAT SHOULD DO FOR NOW.
I COULDN'T TELL WHICH THOUGHTS WERE MY OWN ANYMORE.
I'VE GOT A JOB FOR YOU
HUH?
MY PAST UNRAVELED.

I NEED YOU TO BE ME FOR A WHILE.
BUT WHEN I WANT MY LIFE BACK,
YOU GIVE IT BACK, OKAY?
HUH?
MY LIFE HAS ALWAYS BEEN BORING.
BUT THINGS ARE DIFFERENT NOW
NOW, I FEEL LIKE I'M RUNNING ...
CHASING
AFTER MYSELF

KON!
I HAVE TO FIND OUT WHO I REALLY AM.
I WANT TO BE FRIENDS!
I JUST...
YOUR EXISTENCE is MEANINGLESS, ISN'T IT?
TOKI...
I JUST WANTED... TO BE SPECIAL...
I'M SORRY...

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by TAKAYAMA Shinobu

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Sweetfish & Rice

CHAPTER 97
OUT FROM THE MUD

FOR THE FOOD!
CLAP
THANKS

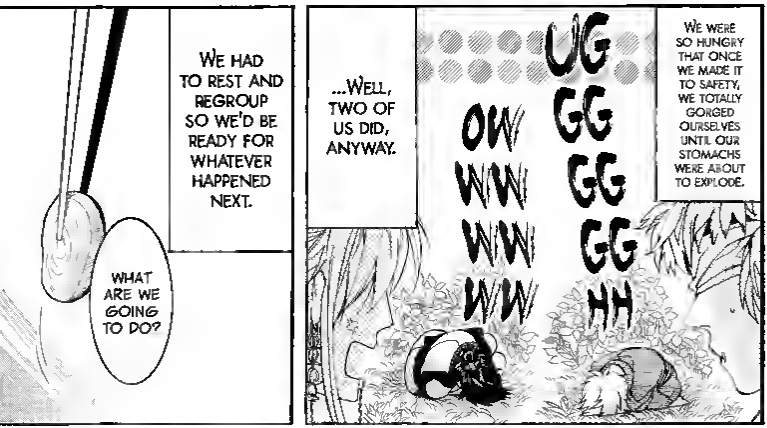
talk
NOW, LET'S EAT.
talk

AFTER THAT WE'D HAVE TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO MAKE IT BACK TO THE RAJOUMON GATE.
Mmm!

AND ONCE AGAIN, IT WAS TIME TO EAT
talk
It's good~!

I COULDN'T BELIEVE HOW MUCH FOOD THERE WAS.

AND ONCE WE SMELT THAT GIANT CLAM COOKING IN THE FIRE,
I DON'T THINK THAT'S WHAT HE'S TRYING TO DO
NO.
HE'S NOT TRYING TO SIMPLY BURN THE ILLUSION. IT COULD STILL BE REMADE


WE HAD TO REST AND REGROUP SO WE'D BE READY FOR WHATEVER HAPPENED NEXT.
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?
...WELL, TWO OF US DID, ANYWAY.
WE WERE SO HUNGRY THAT ONCE WE MADE IT TO SAFETY, WE TOTALLY GORGED OURSELVES UNTIL OUR STOMACHS WERE ABOUT TO EXPLODE.
UGGGGGGHH
OWWWWWW

IT LOOKS LIKE THE PATHS WE TOOK THROUGH THE TORII GATES...
WERE BOTH DEAD ENDS
CHEW
CHEW

BUT...
IF YOU WANT TO RETURN TO THE REALM OF THE HIGH PRIEST, THE TORII, COME THIS WAY.
BUT THAT'S AS FAR AS IT WENT.
THE PATH OF THE DEAD TOOK US TO THE INUGAMI'S VILLAGE,
JINGLE
gush
WE CAN'T JUST RETRACE OUR STEPS AND GO BACK THROUGH THE TORII GATES
IF ONLY THE VILLAGE WEREN'T GONE NOW...
LET'S PASS!
IF YOU WANT TO RETURN TO THE REALM OF THE HIGH PRIEST, THE TORII, COME THIS WAY.
SO I GUESS WE COULD HAVE TAKEN THAT WAY BACK, BUT WE KINDA BROKE IT...
THE PATH OF THE PRIESTESSES TOOK US THROUGH THE MIRROR MAZE...
JINGL
IF WE COULD JUST FIND ANOTHER TORII GATE, WE COULD PROBABLY CONNECT TO ONE THAT WOULD TAKE US BACK.
AFTER ALL, THERE'S MORE THAN ONE TORII GATE THAT LEADS TO THE OUTSIDE.
Hm...
①
②
③
WE'VE USED THEM A COUPLE OF TIMES

IF WE TRY TO TAKE THE OTHER PATH, IT WILL ONLY LEAD US BACK TO THE VILLAGE...
rustle
I GUESS WE'VE GOT NO CHOICE BUT TO KEEP FOLLOWING THE PATH OF THE PRIESTESSES AND SEE WHERE IT GOES.
YEAH, THAT IS WEIRD.
BUT WHEN WE CAME THROUGH THE TORII GATE EARLIER, THE PATH LEAD BACK TO RAJOUMON.
BUT WAIT...
BEFORE, WHEN I CHOSE THE PATH OF THE PRIEST-ESSES,
THE YAKOU SAID
THAT WE'D FIND THE PRIESTESSES AT THE END OF IT
I THINK.
SO PERHAPS WE HAVEN'T YET REACHED THE END OF THAT PATH
OH!
YOU'RE RIGHT!
I'M CONVINCED THAT THE PRIESTESSES ARE HIDDEN SOMEWHERE ON THE DEMON PATHS
MOST LIKELY
EH-?
YOU THINK WE CAN GET OUT THAT WAY?

THEY'RE ALSO REMOVED FROM NORMAL SPACE AND TIME.
THE DEMON PATHS AREN'T JUST USEFUL FOR MOVING AROUND QUICKLY.

HUH?

I NEED A MAP!
WAIT
Um, could somebody explain this to me...?

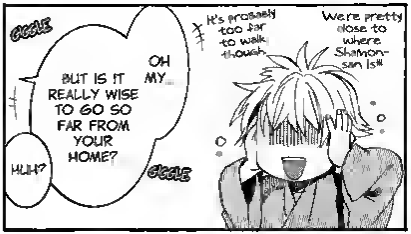
HUH?

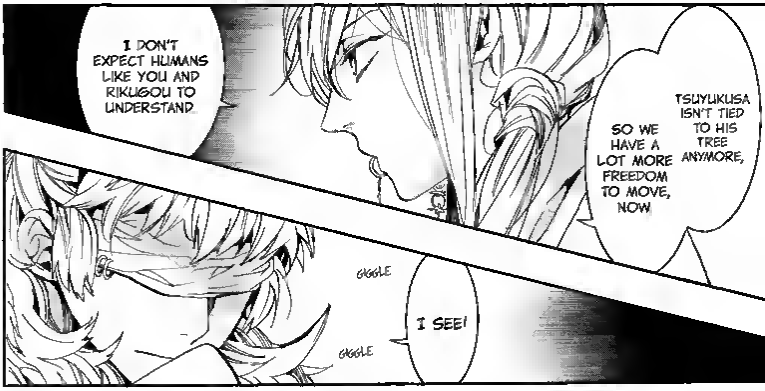
Hm.
YOUR YOUNGER BROTHER'S TREE IS LOCATED ON A SACRED MOUNTAIN, RIGHT?
BEFORE, THERE WAS A PATH RUNNING DIRECTLY FROM THERE TO EDO CASTLE, WASN'T THERE?
IT'S STRANGE THAT IMPORTANT PLACES ARE SO WELL CONNECTED.

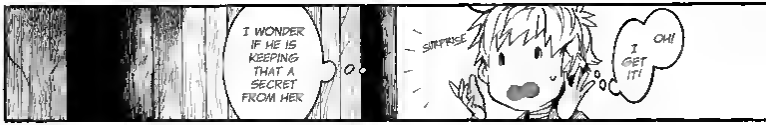
NOTE TAKEBASHI IS A DISTRICT OF TOKYO THAT'S VERY CLOSE TO THE IMPERIAL PALACE AND UENO PARK.
BLINK
.....
WE PASSED THROUGH TAKEBASHI.
AND YUSHIMA TENJIN SHRINE
NOTE YUSHIMA TENJIN SHRINE IS A SHRINE TO THE GOD OF LEARNING AND THE GOD OF SPORTS. IT'S CLOSE TO UENO PARK AND TOKYO UNIVERSITY, SO IT'S POPULAR WITH STUDENTS SEEKING GOOD LUCK ON THEIR EXAMS!
?
.....
.....
SO WE'RE IN UENO?!
I THINK.
THEN KANEIJI TEMPLE.
THEN WE PASSED THROUGH FOREST FOR A WHILE.
THEN TO-SHOGU SHRINE
AND SHINO-BAZU POND
NOTE SHINOBAZU POND IS A LAKE LOCATED WITHIN UENO PARK.
NOTE THERE ARE SEVERAL "TOSHOGU" SHRINES DEDICATED TO SHOGUN TOKUGAWA IEYASU. BUT THE ONE IN UENO PARK IS ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS.
NOTE THE GROUNDS OF KANEIJI TEMPLE USED TO COVER MUCH OF MODERN-DAY UENO PARK. BUT MOST OF THE TEMPLE WAS DESTROYED IN THE 1860S. THE MOST FAMOUS PART OF THE TEMPLE IS THE 5-STORIED PAGODA, WHICH STILL STANDS IN UENO PARK.
The Five-Storied Pagoda of Heaven's Scent
WOOSH
WE WERE IN UENO ALL ALONG?!
YOU MEAN
EEEH?!
!?
SHOCK
NOTE UENO IS A VERY WELL KNOWN PART OF TOKYO. BUT TOKI NEVER RECOGNIZED THE AMATSUKI-VERSE'S HISTORICAL VERSION OF HIS OWN HOME CITY. HE'S NOT THAT SMART

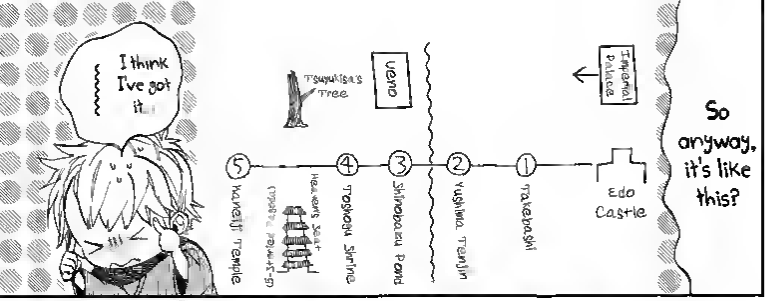
NO WAY !!
Those other temples and shrines were too far away to recognize!!
DOES THAT MEAN YOUR PAGODA IS AROUND HERE TOO?
NOD

I DIDN'T KNOW!!
WELL, OBVI-OUSLY.
DON'T YOU HAVE ANY SENSE OF DIREC-TION?!
I'm just a fresh-man!!


GIGGLE
OH MY...
BUT IS IT REALLY WISE TO GO SO FAR FROM YOUR HOME?
HUH?
GIGGLE
It's probably too far to walk through.
We're pretty close to where Shamon-sam is!!

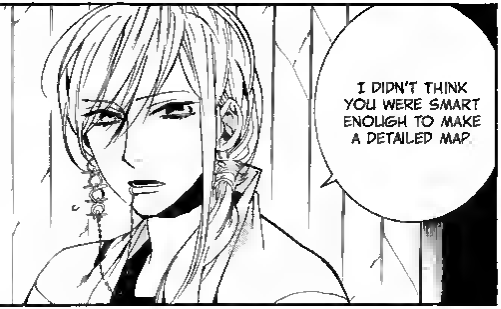

I DON'T EXPECT HUMANS LIKE YOU AND RIKUGOU TO UNDERSTAND.
SO WE HAVE A LOT MORE FREEDOM TO MOVE, NOW.
TSUYUKUSA ISN'T TIED TO HIS TREE ANYMORE,
GIGGLE
I SEE!
GIGGLE


I WONDER IF HE IS KEEPING THAT A SECRET FROM HER.
SURPRISE
OH! I GET IT!


So anyway, it's like this?
Imperial Palace
Edo Castle
1 Nakabashi
2 Yushima Tenjin
3 Shinobazu Pond
4 Toshogu Shrine
5 Kaneiji Temple
Heaven's Scent
Tsuyukisa's Tree
Ueno
I think I've got it...

Finally, it felt like we were making progress again.
It felt like we were walking forever, but in reality we only moved a few kilometres...
Wow, the demon paths are so freaky.
Hehl... I'm surprised.
Uuu
aa ah!

In my time, this whole area is part of Ueno Park!
The path of the priestesses must end around there!


I didn't think you were smart enough to make a detailed map

I caught a glimpse of Beni-san's map before...
Oh, well,
Hlh?

AND, WELL...
BUT THINKING ABOUT IT...
THIS IS A MAP THAT DOCTORS USE TO MAKE THEIR HOME VISITS
I THOUGHT BACK THEN THAT EVEN IN MODERN MAPS,
YOU COULD STILL SEE THE SHADOWS OF OLD EDO
MADE ME SUDDENLY FEEL WISTFUL...
SEE, IT'S A MAP OF NIHONBASHI.
AND HERE'S OUR
HERE'S THE

I KNOW UENO PRETTY WELL.
I'VE GOT A PLACE IN UENO
A LONG TIME AGO...
I KINDA WANTED TO LIVE THERE ONE DAY.
I'M BUILDING ME A LITTLE HOUSE THERE
OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

...!
...UENO?
YEAH!
THERE ARE A LOT OF TREES THERE,
AND IT'S PRETTY QUIET AND SAFE...
IS CHITOSE GOING TO LIVE WITH YOU?
!?
ARE YOU CRAZY?!
THERE'S NO WAY SHE WOULD!

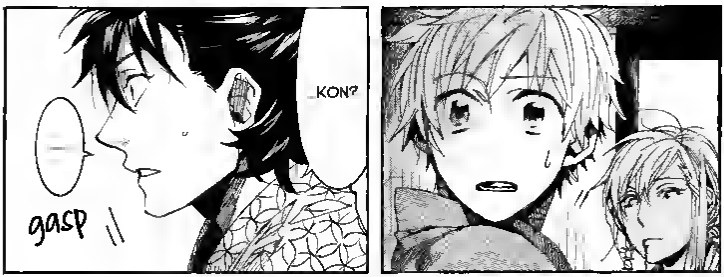
HUH?
...IS THAT A NO?
CAN I...
UM...
CAN I COME STAY WITH YOU TOO?
BUT IT SURE IS A NICE DREAM!
I WANNA GET SETTLED BEFORE I START A FAMILY
UM, WELL, I MEAN...
Hush
HEY...
OH, COME ON...
SHIT...
.....
NO, IT'S JUST... KIND OF A BIG DECISION, YOU KNOW?
sniffle

Sure, what the hell!
LAUGH

shock
RIKUGOU?
BUT I CAN'T REMEMBER WHERE IN UENO WE WERE GOING TO LIVE...
THAT SURE BRINGS BACK MEMORIES ...

!
OH, SORRY!
IT'S JUST THAT THIS NEIGHBORHOOD IS REALLY FAMOUS IN MY TIME!!
HA HA HA
I WENT THERE ON A TRIP IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL..
THERE'S A ZOO AND EVERY-THING!
!
THAT'S RIGHT. THERE IS A ZOO
IT'S FAMOUS FOR THE PANDAS..
RIGHT?
UM...
YEAH... I'M SUR-PRISED YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT.
:
HAHA..
IT ALMOST SOUNDS LIKE YOU'VE SEEN IT YOUR-SELF.
UM... HAVE YOU BEEN TO THE ZOO?
THAT'S...
NO
BUT I'VE SEEN IT
I THINK.

...HEY, KON?
DOES THE UENO ZOO ...
EXIST IN THIS TIME, TOO?
I DIDN'T THINK IT WAS AROUND IN THE EDO PERIOD...
WHAT?
I....
HOW THE HELL SHOULD I KNOW?!


...KON?
gasp

I GUESS...
UM... NEVER MIND
I GUESS I JUST DON'T REMEMBER ANYTHING ABOUT THE UENO IN OUR WORLD
BUT THERE'S NOTHING LIKE THAT IN THE UENO HERE.
...
...KON?
I'M WORRIED...
SHOCK
YOU'VE BEEN ACTING WEIRD, YOU KNOW?
...
AH, YES
...
THAT'S RIGHT -
.....
TOKI...
?
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN WHILE [redacted] SEPARATED?

EH?
!?
YOU MEAN... AMATSUKI OR THE REAL WORLD?
TWITCH
WHICH...
IS MORE IMPORTANT TO YOU?
THIS WORLD OR THAT WORLD?

NO. I MEAN. I KNOW YOU WANT TO GO BACK TO YOUR WORLD..
OF COURSE IT'S IMPORTANT TO YOU...
WELL, YEAH, I WANT TO GO HOME.
BUT HOW CAN YOU THINK THAT MEANS THAT AMATSUKI ISN'T IMPORTANT TO ME?!
I'VE MADE SO MANY FRIENDS HERE... I'VE MADE SO MANY MEMORIES.
DO YOU THINK I'D BE DOING ALL OF THIS IF AMATSUKI WASN'T IMPORTANT TO ME?
WHAT'S WRONG, KON?
YOU'RE NOT ACTING LIKE YOURSELF!
BACK THEN...
SOMETHING HAPPENED TO YOU!!

PLEASE, TALK TO ME!!
!!
WHAT'S BOTHERING YOU?!
I PROMISED THAT I WOULD PROTECT YOU!

I KNOW THAT SHINONOME AND KON ARE DIFFERENT PEOPLE
BUT THAT DOESN'T MAKE YOU ANY LESS IMPORTANT TO ME

SORRY.
I'M FINE.
REALLY
HAHA HA..
IT'S NO-THING
HAHA..
HAHA...
HAHA!
KON?
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT
HUUH?
EHH HH?!
I WAS REALLY WORRIED ABOUT YOU!!!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?!
yeah?
RIKU-GOU!
Ar rrg ggh hh!!
I don't under-steaaaaa and!!!
roll roll roll roll roll roll

SO WHAT DO YOU THINK?
SHOULD WE GO TO UENO?
UM...
YEAH!
I MEAN, WE CAN'T GO BACK ON THE PATH OF CORPSES
SO I GUESS WE HAVE TO KEEP GOING, RIGHT?
FINE. WE'LL BE MEETING UP WITH TSUYUKUSA SOON.
GLANCE
OH BOY. IT'S LIKE A REUNION

IT'S ALMOST TIME...
flap
flap
I GOT IT!!
Here, eat this worm!
Ew.
pull pull
RUSTLE
Um...
HASHI-TA?
WHAT?
STARE
Gross.
YOU DON'T WANT IT?
NO THANKS
THERE'S NO WAY IN HELL I'M EATING THAT.

HERE, ARE YOU HUNGRY?
HAHA, I GUESS I AM!
THANKS,
TSUYU-KUSA.
.....
WHAT? OH, I GUESS YOU'RE NOT USED TO ME YET, HUH?
IT'S OKAY, I STILL FEEL LIKE I'M DREAM-ING, TOO
IT IS SAFE TO EAT THE FOOD HERE, RIGHT?
What do you mean dreaming?!

IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE I'VE SEEN THEM
WHAT-EVER
I THINK TOKI AND THE REST ARE GOING TO MEET UP WITH US SOON
I SEE..
MEET-ING UP..
YES
WELL, AT LEAST I KNOW THAT TOKI IS REAL
EVERY-THING ELSE HAS TO BE A DREAM.
OR IS IT?
I WONDER IF I'LL RUN INTO ANY OTHER FAMILIAR FACES...
IT'S LIKE FATE IS BRINGING US TOGETHER, HUH?
?

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by TAKAYAMA Shinobu

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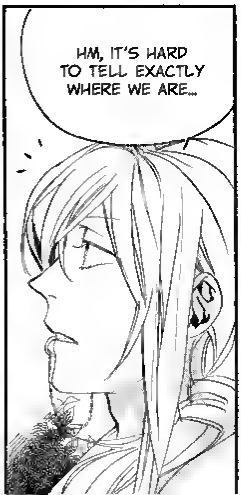
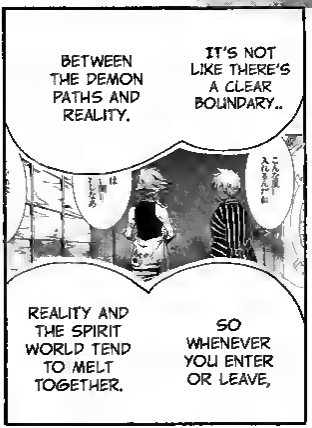
CHAPTER 98
THE NIGHTINGALE THAT CALLS TO THE MOON, PART I

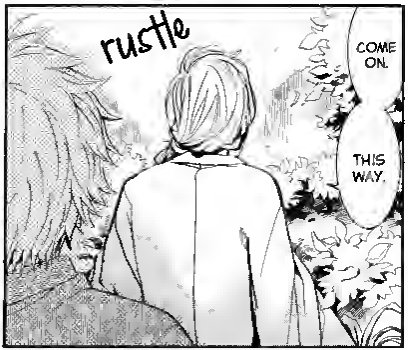
...SO THIS IS UENO?
SORT OF

rustle


HM, IT'S HARD TO TELL EXACTLY WHERE WE ARE...


IT'S NOT LIKE THERE'S A CLEAR BOUNDARY..
BETWEEN THE DEMON PATHS AND REALITY.
SO WHENEVER YOU ENTER OR LEAVE,
REALITY AND THE SPIRIT WORLD TEND TO MELT TOGETHER.

WELL, I GUESS WE'RE BACK.
OH!


rustle
COME ON.
THIS WAY.

I WONDER IF IT'S STILL BEING AFFECTED BY THE DEMON WORLD.
SOME-THING DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT...
I KNOW THIS IS UENO, BUT...
REALLY?

It feels like...

We're somehow on the border between Amatsuki and my world...
Toki!!
Hey!
Oi!!
You really came back...
Oh...

wa
Tsuyu-kusa, you got so big!!
HASHITA-SAN!!
TSUYU-KUSA!!
gasp
I'm crying so hard that I can't see...
twitch
SHUT UP!
WIGGLE
What the hell are you doing?
HEY, THE BIRD AND THE BRAT ARE HERE, TOO?
Yeah, we're over here!!

ru
ru

Bwa haha haha!!
huh?
HA-SHITA-SAN?
WHAT ARE YOU DO-ING?
ISN'T IT OB-VIOUS?!
HASHITA
WELL, I MEAN, I GUESS I LOOK PRETTY FUNNY TOO.
HASHITA ...?
WHAT IS IT?
YOU TWO AREN'T SAYING ANYTHING.
WHAT'S GOING ON...?

B...
BUT HOW...
THIS CAN'T BE...
!!!
H...
HASHITA-SAN?
HUH?

I DON'T...
What the...
Wait...
cough
gasp
WHAT'S GOING ON?
...HASHITA? BUT HOW?!
UM...
Hashita? Old man?
But why ...
Are you dressed like the bird?
cough
WAIT..
YOU GUYS..
DON'T YOU KNOW WHO I AM?

Wakasa...
Aonibi...

I...
I KNOW, BUT...
I DON'T —
DO I... KNOW YOU...?
HEY...
TIME OUT!
WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?! WHY AM I...?
HASHITA-SAN?! COULD IT BE THAT YOU.
KNOW THESE GUYS?!
HUH?
YEAH, OF COURSE I DO!
THEY'RE MY BUDDIES FROM WORK!

They look pretty close to the way they do in real life, so I guess I'm still dreaming...
HASHI-TA-SAN!
wakaha
I KEEP TELLING YOU - THIS ISN'T A DREAM!!
You've got to trust me, okay?!
Eh?!
what?!
YOU MEAN... I'M REALLY NOT DREAMING?
UM...
BUT THEN WHY DO I SUDDENLY LOOK LIKE THIS?
HOW DID THAT HAPPEN?!
WELL, UH...

YOU KNOW, IT'S TERRIBLY DIFFICULT TO PROVE THAT THE WORLD YOU SEE IS THE "REAL" ONE...
AONIBI?
UTSU-BUSHI-SAN..
NO, HASHITA-SAN...
BUT..
WHY..
WHY IS IT THAT I SUDDENLY HAVE MEMORIES OF YOU?
BUT...
IF ALL OF A SUDDEN I HAVE KNOWLEDGE THAT I SHOULDN'T BE ABLE TO HAVE,
THEN THAT MEANS THIS CAN'T ALL BE HAPPENING IN MY HEAD.
YOU...
Gulp
WAKASA-SAN, IT'S THE SAME FOR YOU, RIGHT?
!?
Uwah ...
Give me a minute...
OI...

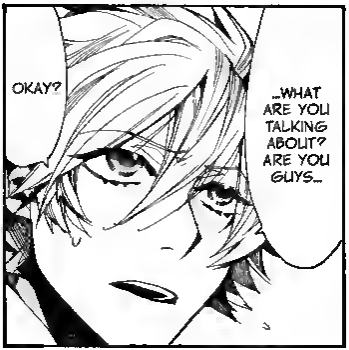
Ugh ...!!
This feels just like when I play sensory immersion video games for too long...
My head is spinning...
I feel sick...
I don't think this is a dream...
HOLY SHIT, WHAT HAPPENED TO ME?!
WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?!
shock
SUSU-TAKE-SAN...
WHAT IS THIS SHIT COSPLAY?!
GISP
THIS IS SOME KIND OF TOTAL IMMERSION GAME, RIGHT?!
HOW DO YOU KNOW ABOUT VIDEO GAMES?!

.....?!
YOU TWO...
ARE FROM THE REAL WORLD?!
ME TOO, ME TOO!
BUT I CAN'T REMEMBER WHAT I WAS DOING IN MY LAST FEW MOMENTS AS WAKASA...
IT'S LIKE I WOKE UP AND I WAS SUDDENLY SUSUITAKE!!
I THINK WE CAN RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THIS IS A DREAM.
THERE'S SIMPLY TOO MUCH NEW INFORMATION CONTENT
I HAVE MEMORIES OF BEING "AINEZU," BUT I'M ALSO AWARE THAT I'M "AONIB!"
IT'S LIKE THEY'RE BLENDED TOGETHER
HEY, HEY...
ARE YOU SERIOUS ABOUT THIS?!

THE MORE WE'RE REMINDED OF OUR OLD LIVES, THE MORE MEMORIES START COMING BACK...
WHAT DOES IT MEAN...?!
HEY, YOU GUYS! WHAT'S GOT YOU SO WORKED UP?
THIS ISN'T A GOOD PLACE TO STOP AND CHAT!
WE HAVE TO GO FIND THE PRIEST-ESSES...
flap flap

AH! WHAT ARE YOU DOING SUSUTAKE?!
EE?!
?!
kyaa
Kac-chan, it's you!!
And you can talk!!
SHOCK
KAC-CHAN!!

NOTE "KACCHAN" WAS THE UNOFFICIAL MASCOT SPRITE OF THEIR SPY BUSINESS BACK IN CHAPTER 49



WHAT IF... WE'RE ALL FROM THE WORLD THEY CALL "NIRVANA"?
IT'S STARTING TO SEEM POSSIBLE...
BUT WHY...? IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE...

.....!
TREMBLE

?

WHOA, WHOA...
SO THIS ISN'T A DREAM.
WE'RE ALL REALLY IN THIS PLACE.
SO IT BEGS THE QUESTION.

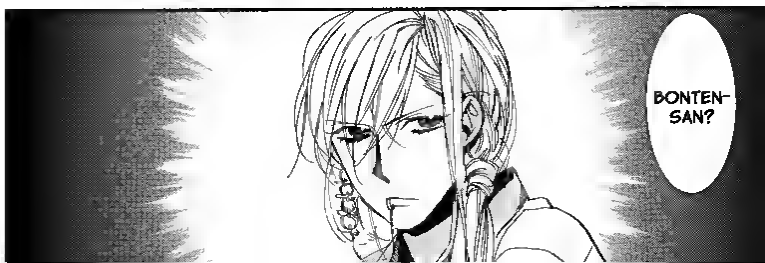
SHOCK
WHAT IS AMATSUKI?

We were investigating the Sensai Corporation!!
Back in the real world...
You're right!!
It's the same as their logo!!
THE SENSAI CORPORATION!!
SOMETHING ABOUT THAT YAKOU'S FACE COVERING SEEMS REALLY FAMILIAR...
AND FOR WHAT PURPOSE WERE WE BROUGHT HERE?

SO THE YAKOU IS WEARING THEIR LOGO ON HIS FACE...
THIS PLACE MUST HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH SENSAI

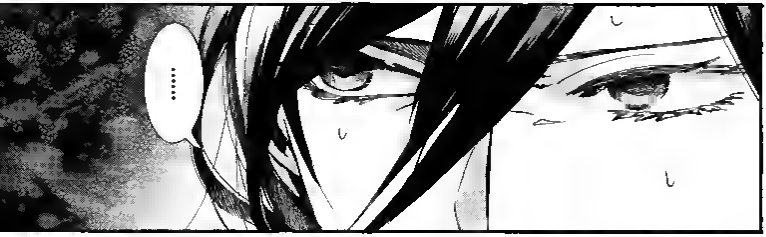
BUT WHILE WE WERE INVESTI-GATING,
WE NEVER SAW ANYTHING ABOUT "AMATSUKI,"
OR ABOUT THIS "YAKOU."

glance
...UNLESS YOU KNOW SOME-THING,


BONTEN-SAN?

NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT,
YOU'VE ALWAYS SEEMED TO AVOID LETTING ME, UTSUBUSHI AND SUSUTAKE-SAN ALL BE IN THE SAME PLACE AT THE SAME TIME.
I GUESS YOU COULD CALL IT DESTINY
HONEST-LY, I ASSUMED THAT YOU DISLIKED ME.
BUT NOW I WONDER...
WAS IT THAT YOU WERE TRYING TO PREVENT SOMETHING LIKE THIS FROM HAPPENING?

!


.....

WELL, IT DOESN'T MATTER.
IF I WORRY TOO MUCH ABOUT YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN ALL OF THIS, I'M PROBABLY JUST GOING TO MAKE THE SITUATION EVEN WORSE.

ANY-
HOW,
I'M SURE THAT EVERYTHING WILL SOON COME TO LIGHT.
.....

AINEZU ...?
PLEASE FORGIVE ME.
I'VE CAUSED YOU TO WORRY, HAVEN'T I?
I PROMISE, I'LL EXPLAIN EVERYTHING TO YOU SOON.
.....
MUMBLE

HA-SHITA-SAN?
WHAT IS THE SENSAI CORPORA-TION?
OH!
RIGHT, YOU WOULDN'T KNOW
THEY'RE A BUSINESS THAT WE WERE INVES-TIGATING...
I DIDN'T KNOW ANY-THING
I WAS ALWAYS THE NAME-LESS PROTA-GONIST
I DIDN'T HAVE ANY BONDS WITH OTHER PEOPLE.
MAYBE SOME-WHERE IN MY HEART...
I'D STARTED TO THINK THAT THE WORLD WAS JUST A GAME, AND I WAS THE MAIN CHA-RACTER.

YEAH. I'VE BEEN THERE.
BUT REALLY...
MAYBE I WAS JUST...
THAT...
THAT WAS HOW...
I CAME INTO THIS WORLD...
AN OUTSIDER IN THIS WORLD.
BUT
SENSAI'S THE COMPANY THAT CREATED THAT "BAKUMATSU INTERACTIVE EXHIBIT" MUSEUM.
HAVE YOU HEARD OF IT?

EASY GOING SCANS
easy going scans
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Japanese Translators
Chinese Translators
Editors
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AMATSUKI

by TAKAYAMA Shinobu

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Amatsuki v16 c99

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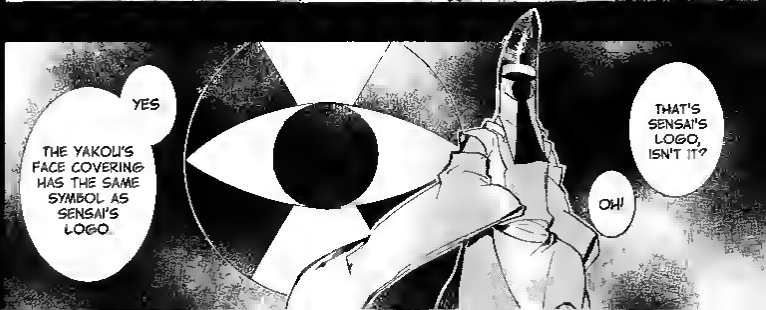
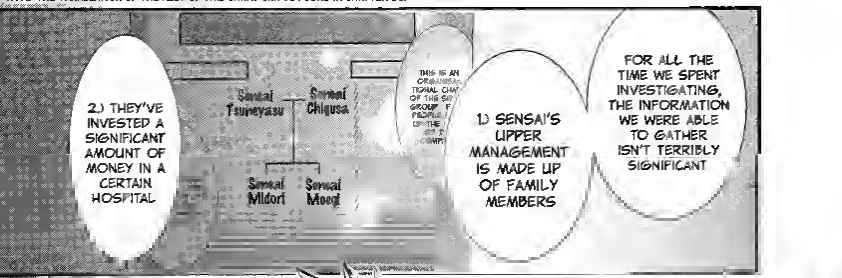
CHAPTER 99
THE NIGHTINGALE THAT CRIES TO THE MOON, PART 2

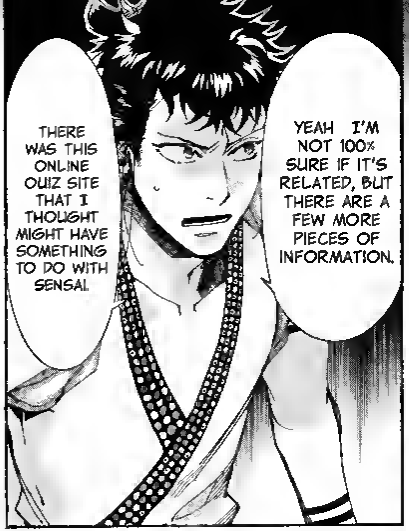
IN REALITY, WE WERE INDUSTRIAL SPIES WORKING FOR THE CHINESE MAFIA - OUR SPECIALTY WAS INFORMATION DEALING
WE WERE OPERATING UNDER THE GUISE OF AN AMERICAN-FUNDED RESEARCH COMPANY, BUT THAT WAS JUST A COVER STORY.
SENSAI WAS PRODUCING CUTTING-EDGE VIRTUAL REALITY TECHNOLOGY FOR THE EDUCATIONAL MARKET THEIR PROFITS HAD GROWN EXPLOSIVELY OVER THE PAST TEN YEARS
WE WERE ASKED BY A CLIENT TO INVESTIGATE AND UP-AND-COMING IT COMPANY.
WE WERE TO OBTAIN THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY FROM THIS "SENSAI CORPORATION".
Neuro Science
WE'VE IDENTIFIED THREE INVOLVEMENT IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THIS SHINSAGHT CLINIC. BUT THERE TWO AREAS ARE NOT NECESSARILY UNRELATED
WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?
...AH, THAT'S RIGHT SPEAKING OF SENSAI'S GROWTH.


YES
THE YAKUI'S FACE COVERING HAS THE SAME SYMBOL AS SENSAI'S LOGO.
THAT'S SENSAI'S LOGO, ISN'T IT?
OH!

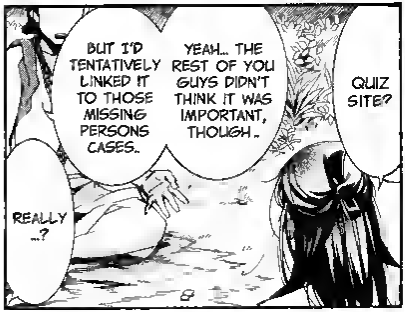
PAPA, YOU SHOULD ASK FOR YOUR MONEY BACK!
EH?!
IT SEEMS THAT HIS HACKING WAS DISCOVERED SO HE HAD TO CLOSE UP SHOP
I CAN FISH FOR ANYTHING YOU WANT IN THIS OCEAN. THAT IS THE NET
FROM FINDING OUT WHAT THE PEOPLE NEXT DOOR ARE MAKING FOR DINNER TO SNEAKING INFO FROM THE TOP BANKS,
ORIGINALLY, THE SENSAI COR"ORA-TION'S CORE BUSINESS...
HE CLEARLY OUT FAST SO HE COULD
AND THAT'S PRETTY FRAGMENTED.
BUT AS FAR AS THEIR TECH, I WAS ONLY ABLE TO STEAL A LITTLE BIT OF INFO...
BUT THEY WERE INVOLVED IN A LITTLE BIT OF EVERY-THING.
WAS DATA SECURITY AND STUFF LIKE THAT.
HOW? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
I DIDN'T THINK IT LOOKED THAT BAD.
There's a lot of money in it for us.
Q...
SENSAI CORPORATION

NOTE: THE TRANSLATION OF THE REST OF THIS CHART CAN BE FOUND IN CHAPTER 38.

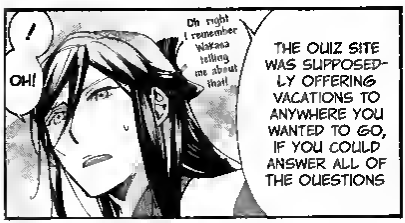

2.) THEY'VE INVESTED A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF MONEY IN A CERTAIN HOSPITAL
Sensai Tsuneyasu
Sensai Chigusa
Sensai Midori
Sensai Moegi
THIS IS AN ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF THE SIX GROUP F PEOPLE UP THE TOP 3 COMP
1.) SENSAI'S UPPER MANAGEMENT IS MADE UP OF FAMILY MEMBERS
FOR ALL THE TIME WE SPENT INVESTIGATING, THE INFORMATION WE WERE ABLE TO GATHER ISN'T TERRIBLY SIGNIFICANT


THERE WAS THIS ONLINE QUIZ SITE THAT I THOUGHT MIGHT HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH SENSAI.
YEAH I'M NOT 100% SURE IF IT'S RELATED, BUT THERE ARE A FEW MORE PIECES OF INFORMATION.

YEAH BUT HE DIED SEVEN YEARS AGO

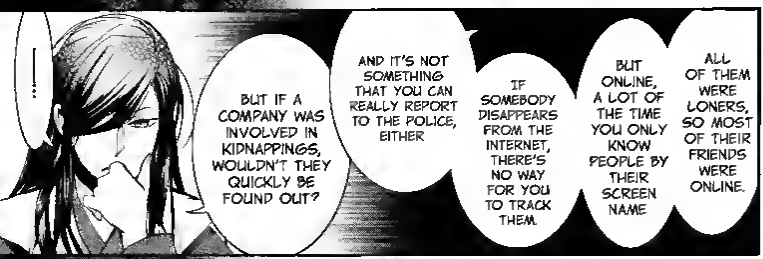

QUIZ SITE?
YEAH... THE REST OF YOU GUYS DIDN'T THINK IT WAS IMPORTANT, THOUGH..
BUT I'D TENTATIVELY LINKED IT TO THOSE MISSING PERSONS CASES..
REALLY ...?

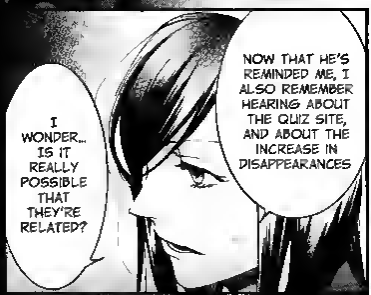
I HADN'T EVEN THOUGHT ABOUT HIM IN YEARS, UNTIL A COUPLE OF MONTHS AGO WHEN YOU REMINDED ME OF HIM.
OH!
YEAH...
I REMEMBER.


OH!
!
Oh right I remember Wakana telling me about that!
THE QUIZ SITE WAS SUPPOSEDLY OFFERING VACATIONS TO ANYWHERE YOU WANTED TO GO, IF YOU COULD ANSWER ALL OF THE QUESTIONS

BUT WHY ARE YOU SUDDENLY BRINGING UP SUOU AT A TIME LIKE THIS...?
I DUNNO, HIS NAME CAME UP DURING THE INVESTIGATION
OH, I SEE..

THAT SITE HAD SENSAI'S LOGO ON IT_ I DUNNO, MAYBE THEY WERE GOING FOR SOME KIND OF SUBLIMINAL CONDITIONING?
WHAT IF ALL THE PEOPLE WHO DISAPPEARED WERE KIDNAPPED BY SENSAI?
Here's a recording of the site taken by one of the users.
He wanted to save a copy of the question, but the site was copy protected, so he took a video
This part is important so watch closely


.....
BUT IF A COMPANY WAS INVOLVED IN KIDNAPPINGS, WOULDN'T THEY QUICKLY BE FOUND OUT?
AND IT'S NOT SOMETHING THAT YOU CAN REALLY REPORT TO THE POLICE, EITHER
IF SOMEBODY DISAPPEARS FROM THE INTERNET, THERE'S NO WAY FOR YOU TO TRACK THEM.
BUT ONLINE, A LOT OF THE TIME YOU ONLY KNOW PEOPLE BY THEIR SCREEN NAME
ALL OF THEM WERE LONERS, SO MOST OF THEIR FRIENDS WERE ONLINE.

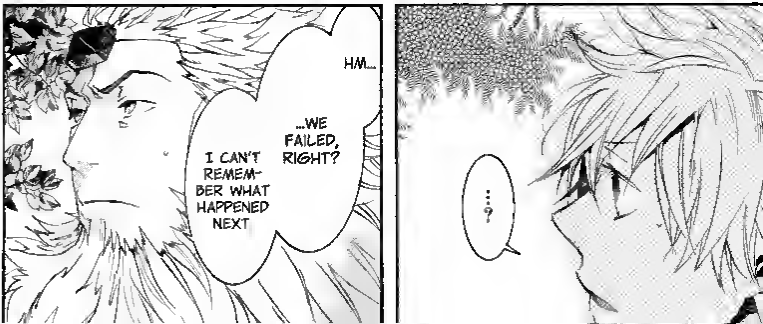

I WONDER... IS IT REALLY POSSIBLE THAT THEY'RE RELATED?
NOW THAT HE'S REMINDED ME, I ALSO REMEMBER HEARING ABOUT THE QUIZ SITE, AND ABOUT THE INCREASE IN DISAPPEARANCES

HASHITA-SAN,
YOU'RE FAMILIAR WITH ALL OF THIS TOO, RIGHT?
YEAH.
BUT EVERY-THING I KNOW, I'VE HEARD FROM WAKASA.

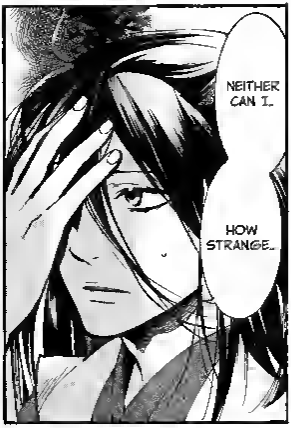
THIS IS INFORMATION...
THAT NONE OF US COULD HAVE FIGURED OUT ON OUR OWN.
WHICH PROVES THAT WE'RE NOT DREAMING...
!
NOD
YEAH, WELL, MAYBE YOU GUYS ARE CONVINCED
BUT YOU'D BETTER HAVE SOME DAMNED GOOD PROOF IF YOU'RE EXPECTING ME TO BELIEVE THAT THIS "AMATSUKI"
OF COURSE.
BUT IT'S WHAT YOU'D CALL A "DEVIL'S PROOF"...
HUMAN BEINGS ARE SUBJECTIVE CREATURES.
IT'S ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE WITH 100% CERTAINTY WHETHER SOMETHING IS "REAL" OR WHETHER IT'S MERELY "LIKELY TO BE REAL"
AND YET WE BASE OUR ENTIRE LIVES ON WHAT IS ESSENTIALLY A GUESS

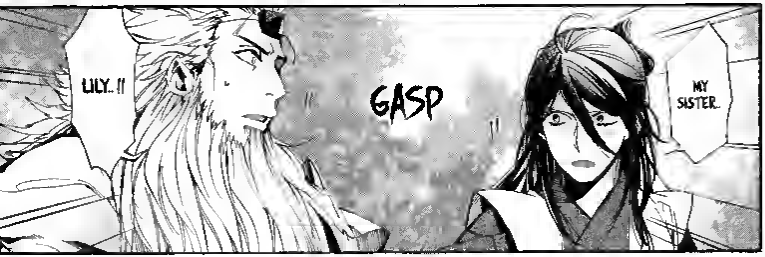
BUT WE CAN PROVE THAT "AMATSUKI" ISN'T JUST ONE PERSON'S DELUSION, BECAUSE THINGS HAVE HAPPENED THAT ARE OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF A SINGLE PERSON'S SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE.
...LET ME EXPLAIN
COUGH
BEFORE ALL OF THIS HAPPENED, WE'D GATHERED ENOUGH INFORMATION TO KNOW THAT SENSAI WAS BUILDING SOME SORT OF HUGE, ENCLOSED SPACE.
IT WAS INTENDED AS A FUN, INTERACTIVE ADDITION TO UENO'S EDO TOKYO MUSEUM- THE BAKUMATSU INTERACTIVE EXHIBIT

AGAIN...
IT'S UENO!
THAT'S RIGHT! I WAS IN UENO BEFORE I CAME HERE!
THE TWO OF US TOOK PART-TIME JOBS AT THE EXHIBIT CONSTRUCTION SITE.
OUR GOAL WAS TO SNEAK IN AND STEAL INFORMATION ON SENSAI'S LATEST TECHNOLOGICAL PRODUCTS.
HOWEVER...
chatter
HEY, WATCH THAT!
TANUKI! CARRY THAT OVER.
chatter


HM...
...WE FAILED, RIGHT?
I CAN'T REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED NEXT
...?

I REMEMBER TALKING TO SHIRAAI-SAN JUST BEFORE WE ENDED UP HERE...
SHE WAS WITH LILY-CHAN...
JUST WAIT
ARE HASHITA AND KONJIN BACK YET?


NEITHER CAN I...
HOW STRANGE...


LILY..!!
GASP
MY SISTER.

Eh?
N-no, sorry...
I have no idea who you're talking about!!
HAVE YOU PERHAPS SEEN A WOMAN WHO LOOKS VERY MUCH LIKE ME?!
RIKUGOU-SAN!!
WELL SHE'S A BIT MORE CONFIDENT AND A BIT BRASHER.

THAT'S
Sorry, but I don't know!!
WHERE IS SHE?!
WAKASA-SAN WHAT HAPPENED TO MY SISTER..?!

...
I...
I SEE...
Well, maybe she just didn't get sucked into all of this!
Right?
...I WONDER.
THAT WOULD BE FOR THE BEST...
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT,
PERHAPS I'VE BEEN UNCONSCIOUSLY SEARCHING FOR HER...
OR AT LEAST SOMEONE LIKE HER...
.....

HA-SHITA-SAN?
WHAT'S WRONG?
YOU DON'T LOOK SO GOOD...
.....
UM...
NO...
IT'S NO-THING.

OH!
HEY, TOKI!
AFTER THEY FINISHED BUILDING THE BAKUMATSU INTERACTIVE EXHIBIT, YOU WERE A VISITOR THERE, RIGHT?
HUH?
OH
AND THAT'S HOW YOU FOUND YOURSELF IN "AMA-TSUKI?"
YEAH
I FAILED A TEST...
SO I GOT SENT THERE FOR EXTRA CREDIT
I WAS CHASED BY THE NUE...

I HUNG OUT WITH KON...
I MET KUCHIHA...
YOU THREE, KON, AND ME.
BUT THE ONLY PEOPLE THAT I KNOW FOR SURE ARE FROM THE REAL WORLD ARE...
...OH, AND BONTEN.

He doesn't know anything about himself anymore
But Kon doesn't have any memories of our world anymore. But Kon doesn't have any memories of our world anymore...
And lately his eyes look so dull and lifeless...
Yeah

YOU'RE RIGHT.
AS YOU'VE ALREADY FIGURED OUT,
I'M FROM THE SAME PLACE YOU ARE,
AND I KNOW HOW THIS WORLD WAS CREATED
I KNOW THE TRUE IDENTITY OF TEITEN.

AND THAT'S WHY...
!
I STILL CAN'T TELL YOU THE TRUTH.

COME ON BON...!
HOW CAN YOU HOLD OUT ON US LIKE THAT?!
WH..
WHAT?!
I STILL...
HEY
HE BECAME "BONTEN" -
IN ORDER TO SAVE ME...
PYAKU-

I...
I... I SUDDENLY UNDERSTOOD.
.....
AND THIS ISN'T JUST MY PRIDE TALKING.
THIS WORLD IS LIKE "SEEING THE MOON ON A RAINY NIGHT" IT'S A PLACE THAT SHOULDN'T EXIST
WE DON'T NEED GODS OR HEAVEN OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT.
EVERYTHING IN THIS WORLD HAPPENS UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYE OF HEAVEN.
FOR SOME REASON, SHINSHU AND I WERE BESTOWED WITH POWER AND PRIVILEGE.
BUT PERHAPS, FOR BONTEN, THAT POWER ALWAYS FELT LIKE A NOOSE AROUND HIS NECK.
YOU MEAN HE'S WORKING FOR TEITEN?!
WHEN YOU GO BACK, YOU MUST TALK TO HIM!
BUT I'M NO LONGER TRAPPED IN TEITEN'S CAGE.

RIKUGOU-SAN
BONTEN WAS FORSAKEN BY HEAVEN, SO I'M ASKING YOU TO PROTECT HIM,
DISAP- PE
WITHOUT MY POWER, THEY'D DIS-APPEAR
THOSE TWO ARE UNSTABLE EXISTENCES
BUT I CAN'T CARRY OUT MY PLANS IN THIS STATE..
I'M BEING PUNISHED FOR ACTING AGAINST TEITEN'S WILL
BON-TEN...
!
HE KNEW TOO MUCH. HE SAID TOO MUCH AND SO HE WAS STRUCK DOWN...
HE'S LIKE A BIRD WHO WAS CAST OUT OF ITS NEST.

BLINK

IF THAT'S THE CASE, WE NEED SOME-THING SAFER...
THAN OUR BARS
LISTEN, CAN LIST IN ON CONVER-TIONS, RIGHT?
ONE BLINK FOR YES...
THAT WAS OUR SILENT CODE!

IS HE REALLY NOT GOING TO TELL US ANY-THING UNTIL THEN?
I WONDER WHAT HE'S WAITING FOR..

whisper

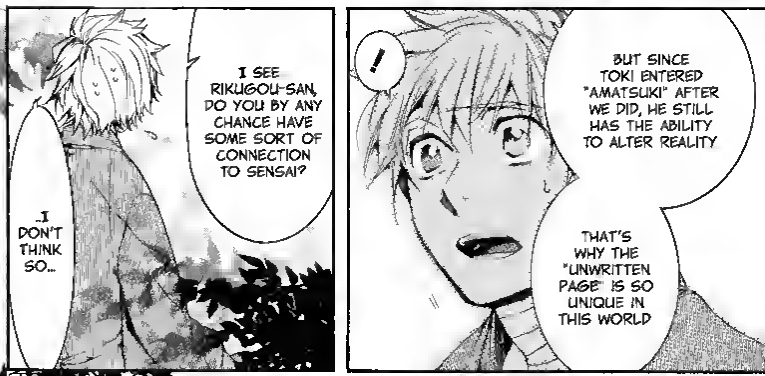
WOULD YOU TELL US EVERY THING YOU KNOW...
IF YOU HAD NOTHING TO FEAR FROM HEAVEN?
!
SURPRISE

WHAT IF...
OKAY, GINSHU-SAN

THIS TIME, I'M GOING TO PROTECT HIM.
YEAH.

IT KINDA SUCKS THOUGH.
WE'VE JUST GOT TO WAIT.
WELL, AT LEAST NOT TOO HARD...
LIM, HEY, GUYS, LET'S NOT PUSH BONTEN FOR ANSWERS RIGHT NOW, OKAY?

THAT BEFORE BONTEN WAS FORCED INTO BECOMING TEITEN'S ERRAND BOY.
I THINK
WE MAY HAVE ALL HAD THAT POWER.
I BELIEVE THAT THIS LAG IN TIME IS WHY RIKUGOU-SAN HAS CAPABILITIES THAT WE DO NOT
BUT RIKUGOU-SAN ENTERED AFTER CONSTRUCTION HAD FINISHED.
OH!
YOU MEAN...
IT'S WHY YOUR WILL...
CAN AFFECT THIS WORLD.
IT SEEMS THAT THE REST OF US WERE BROUGHT INTO "AMATSUKI" BEFORE THE BAKUMATSU INTERACTIVE EXHIBIT WAS COMPLETE.
...
SIGH


I SEE RIKUGOU-SAN, DO YOU BY ANY CHANCE HAVE SOME SORT OF CONNECTION TO SENSAI?
...I DON'T THINK SO...
!
BUT SINCE TOKI ENTERED "AMATSUKI" AFTER WE DID, HE STILL HAS THE ABILITY TO ALTER REALITY
THAT'S WHY THE "UNWRITTEN PAGE" IS SO UNIQUE IN THIS WORLD

BUT WAIT, WHAT ABOUT SHINONOME? WE BOTH CAME TO "AMATSUKI" THROUGH THE EXHIBIT, BUT HE MUST HAVE ENTERED BEFORE ME
MY GUESS IS THAT SHINONOME HAD ALREADY ENTERED "AMATSUKI," AND THAT'S WHY WE COULDN'T FIND HIM ANYWHERE IN THE EXHIBIT.
BUT IF THAT'S TRUE, THEN WHY? WAS THERE SOMETHING HE WANTED HERE..?
BUT I DON'T KNOW ANY-THING...
DID I REALLY JUST GET PULLED INTO THIS WORLD BY ACCIDENT?
SHINONOME HAD GONE OFF TO WANDER AROUND THE EXHIBIT ON HIS OWN, BUT WHEN IT WAS TIME TO LEAVE, WE COULDN'T FIND HIM.
WE ALL SPLIT UP TO LOOK FOR HIM.
AND WHILE I WAS SEARCHING, SOMEHOW I ENDED UP HERE.
BUT SHINONOME SEEMED TO KNOW SOME-THING ABOUT "AMATSUKI" FROM THE BEGINNING...
I WONDER IF MAYBE HE CAME HERE ON PURPOSE.
WAIT
SNAP
THERE'S ONE MORE PERSON.

I...
I USED TO KNOW SOMEONE... SHE WAS A FRIEND OF SUOU'S...
THERE'S ONE MORE PERSON!!
HER NAME WAS "CHITOSE-SAN."
I DON'T REMEMBER EXACTLY WHAT SHE LOOKED LIKE, BUT I KNOW IT WAS HER..!!
CHI-TOSE-SAN?
!!

GASP
WAIT! THAT WAS THE NAME OF ONE OF SENSAI'S SUBPROGRAMS!
"CHITOSE"
...EHEHE... OR MAYBE I SHOULD SAY "HE"? ANYWAY...
SHE'S SOMEONE FROM THE REAL WORLD TOO BUT SHE'S BEEN TURNED INTO A CHARACTER IN "AMATSUKA!"
SHE'S IEMOCHI-SAN!!!
WHAT?!
EH?!
WAS THAT A PERSON'S NAME?
IT CAN BE WRITTEN WITH THE SAME KANJI AS "SENSAI," RIGHT?
HUH, IS THAT SUPPOSED TO BE THE NAME OF THE PROGRAM? CHITOSE?
I DON'T KNOW WHETHER I'M A GOOD PERSON, OR A BAD ONE...
I'M LIKE A GHOST...
I...
I CAN ONLY BE "CHITOSE" FOR SUOU.
HER EYES WERE SO SAD.
NO WAY!!
HUH?!
THE SHOGUN?!
THAT'S
WTF?!
NOTE: SHE SAYS SHE CAN ONLY BE A HUMAN FOR SUOU, BUT THE WORD IS GLOSSED WITH CHITOSE

I WANT YOU TO HELP HER OUT.
IF IT TURNS OUT THAT SHE'S CRYING ON THE INSIDE TOO,
I WANT YOU TO GO IN MY PLACE.
IF I CAN'T HELP HER,
SNAP
OH...
OUR LORD'S WHERE-ABOUTS —
ARE UN-KNOWN.

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by TAKAYAMA Shinobu

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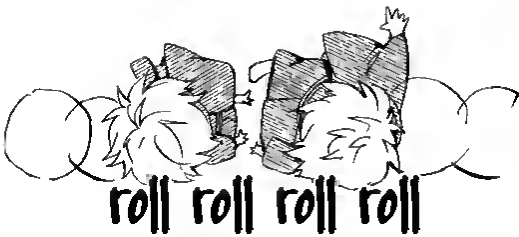
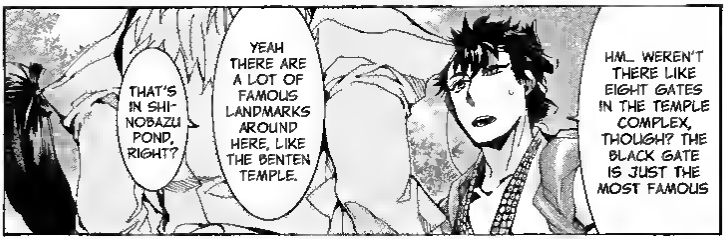
CHAPTER 100
THE NIGHTINGALE THAT CRIES TO THE MOON, PART 3


roll roll roll roll

T/N: THE DATE IS GIVEN AS "THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF THE FIFTH MONTH OF THE 4TH YEAR OF KEIOU " BUT I CONVERTED IT TO THE WESTERN FORMAT
JULY 4TH, 1868
SO THEY CLASHED WITH THE NEW IMPERIAL ARMY IN NEARBY UENO. A FIERCE BATTLE BEGAN: THE BATTLE OF UENO.
THE REMAINING FORCES OF THE DEPOSED SHOGUNATE, WHO CALLED THEMSELVES THE "SHOUGITAI," HAD BEEN EXPELLED FROM EDO CASTLE,
THE SHOUGITAI HAD GATHERED IN UENO TO GUARD THE FORMER SHOGUN, YOSHINOBU,
WHO HAD TAKEN REFUGE IN TOUEIZAN KAN'EIJI, THE TOKUGAWA FAMILY TEMPLE. THEY BARRICADED THEMSELVES WITHIN THE TEMPLE AND FOUGHT BACK
HISTORY TELLS US...
THAT THIS WAS THE LAST STRONG HOLD OF THE TOKUGAWA.
rustle
KEIKI IS THE NAME HE USES AMONG THOSE CLOSE TO HIM, BUT HIS LEGAL NAME IS YOSHINOBU.
YES, NOT AS IN "VERY FAMOUS EVENT" AND "KI" AS IN "HAPPY" BUT AS IN "JOY". HE CARRIES QUITE A BURDEN OF HAPPINESS DOESN'T HE?
NOTE KEIKI IS A ALTERNATIVE READING OF THE KANJI THAT SPELL "YOSHINOBU."

After the fall of Edo Castle, the Shougitai, who refused to accept their loss, went to Ueno.
So if Iemochi - I mean, Chitose-san - was in Edo Castle when it got swallowed up by that black miasma,
Then maybe the shogun's loyalists have regrouped in Ueno...!!
So this is all kind of based on events from history, huh?
It feels like we're in a textbook
It does, a bit!
Laugh
We're trying to reach an exiled shogun who is being guarded by an army...
But this time, we'll be up against demons, not humans.

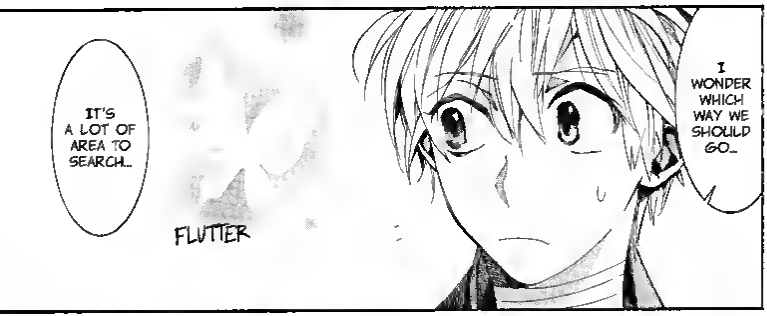
I GUESS WE FINALLY MADE IT OUT OF THE FOREST...
HEY, IS THAT A GATE?
AH, YES, THE MAIN GATE TO THE TEMPLE COMPLEX WAS KNOWN AS THE BLACK GATE.
IT'S PART OF UENO PARK IN MODERN TIMES,
BUT IN THIS TIME PERIOD, IT'S PART OF KAN'EIJI TEMPLE.
IS THAT WHERE THE YAKOU AND THE OTHER AYAKASHI ARE?
IT LOOKS PRETTY BIG, THOUGH.
I'M SURE THIS PLACE WAS CHOSEN BECAUSE IT HAS HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE...
I'M JUST NOT SURE WHAT KIND OF "SIGNIFICANCE" IT IS


HM... WEREN'T THERE LIKE EIGHT GATES IN THE TEMPLE COMPLEX, THOUGH? THE BLACK GATE IS JUST THE MOST FAMOUS
YEAH THERE ARE A LOT OF FAMOUS LANDMARKS AROUND HERE, LIKE THE BENTEN TEMPLE.
THAT'S IN SHINOBAZU POND, RIGHT?

OH, BUT THE MAIN BUILDING OF KAN'EIJI DOESN'T EXIST ANYMORE IN OUR TIME
talk
whaat?
HOW ABOUT THE TOSHOGU SHRINE?
talk
.....
YOU MEAN THE HEADQUARTERS OF HEAVEN'S SEAT WERE THE SITE OF A FAMOUS BATTLE?!
talk
Whoa!

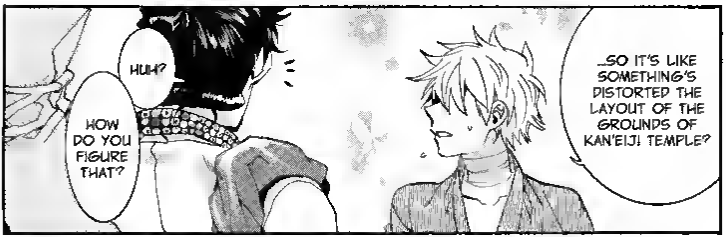
UM, ANYWAY, SHOULDN'T WE GET MOVING?
WE CAN GO SIGHTSEEING LATER!
WOW...
THESE GUYS ARE KIND OF GEEKY, BUT THEY SURE DO KNOW A LOT ABOUT AMATSUKI'S HISTORY!
BUT... I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY'RE SAYING AT ALL...

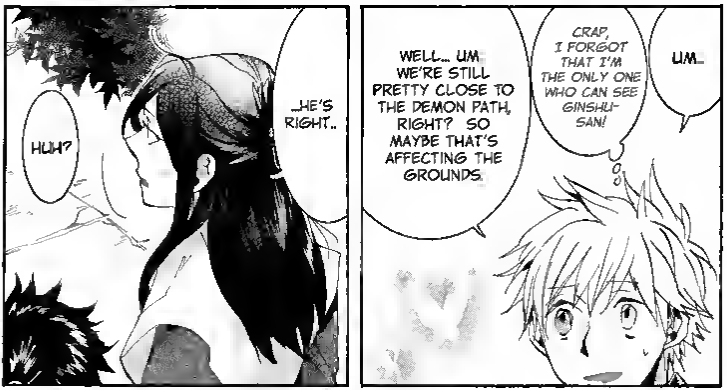
Freaky
WHOA, CREEPY... DON'T TELL ME WE'RE GOING THAT WAY...
THAT ROAD LEADS TO THE INNER PART OF KAN'EIJI TEMPLE, WHERE THE PAGODA AND THE TOSHOGU SHRINE ARE
AND IF YOU GO LEFT, YOU CAN SEE THE BENTEN TEMPLE.


I WONDER WHICH WAY WE SHOULD GO...
IT'S A LOT OF AREA TO SEARCH..
FLUTTER

GINSHU-SAN?
!!!
DO YOU KNOW WHERE WE SHOULD GO?

THIS IS STRANGE...
HUH?
glance
THE SMALLER TEMPLES AND SHRINES OF KAN'EIJI SHOULD BE LOCATED VERY NEAR TO EACH OTHER THE BLACK GATE IS CLOSE TO SHINOBAZU POND
Kannon Temple
Benten Temple
Black Gate
Shinobazu Pond
...BUT NOW THE POND SEEMS VERY FAR AWAY...


...SO IT'S LIKE SOMETHING'S DISTORTED THE LAYOUT OF THE GROUNDS OF KAN'EIJI TEMPLE?
HUH?
HOW DO YOU FIGURE THAT?

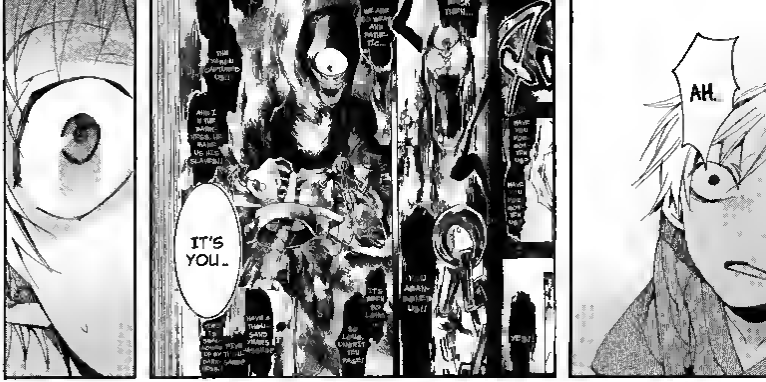

UM...
CRAP, I FORGOT THAT I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN SEE GINSHU-SAN!
WELL... UM WE'RE STILL PRETTY CLOSE TO THE DEMON PATH, RIGHT? SO MAYBE THAT'S AFFECTING THE GROUNDS.
...HE'S RIGHT..
HUH?

REALLY ..?
..SO I'M REALLY NOT SURE WHERE THIS ROAD IS TAKING US.
?
IF WE HADN'T NOTICED THE MISTAKE, WE WOULD HAVE JUST KEPT GOING..
SURELY IT LEADS SOMEWHERE,
BUT RIGHT NOW, I'M NOT SURE WHERE WE'RE GOING...

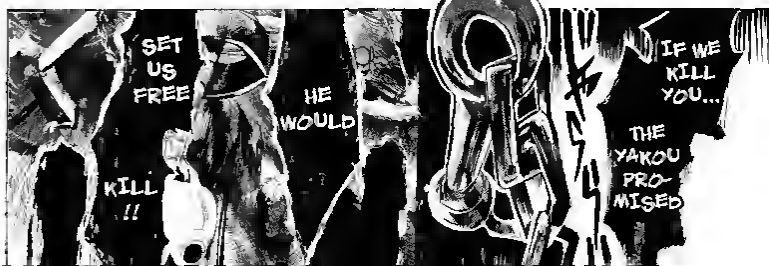
NOTE: THE BELL TOWER AT KANEIJI TEMPLE WAS USED AS A CLOCK DURING THE EDO PERIOD. UNLIKE MOST OF THE HISTORICAL BUILDINGS IN UENO, IT SURVIVED BOTH THE BATTLE OF UENO AND WORLD WAR 2. SO YOU CAN STILL GO SEE THE ORIGINAL IF YOU'RE IN TOKYO.

BUT THIS ISN'T WHERE THE PAGODA IS SUPPOSED TO BE!
?
...OH YEAH, YOU CAN SEE THE BELL TOWER FROM THE TOP OF THE PAGODA.
EH?!
SHOCK
THE PAGODA!
AHA HA HA!!
!!

A HA HA HA !!
HEAVEN'S SEAT IS NOTHING TO US!!
WE CARE NOT FOR THE GREAT DEMONS!!
YES! SS !!
YES SSS SS !!
JAGLE
JAGLE
GULP
AHA HA!! BURN !! BURN !!!

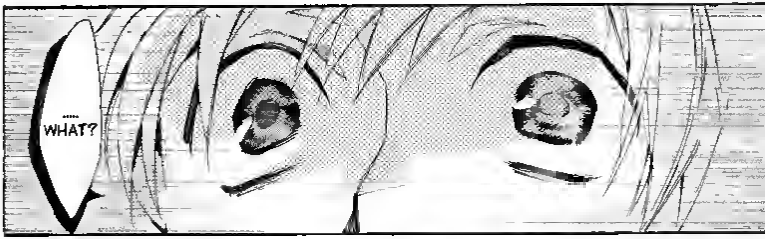

AH.
IT'S YOU..

THE DEMONS FROM BACK THEN..!!
UN-WRIT-TEN NNN PAGE EEE! ....
WE WILL KILL YOU! KILL! KILL!
KILL!
WE WILL KILL YOU ALL!!


IF WE KILL YOU...
THE YAKOU PRO-MISED
HE WOULD
SET US FREE
KILL !!

WE KILL LL!!
PERHAPS ONCE, WE MIGHT HAVE FEARED HEAVEN'S SEAT, BUT NOW...
POOR THINGS
THEY'VE BEEN TRICKED BY THE YAKOU.
WHOA, THEY'VE GONE CRAZY...
I THINK THIS BUNCH WAS ALWAYS CRAZY!!
I'LL PUT THEM IN THEIR PLACE...
TCH.
..SHIT, THEY'RE OUT OF CONTROL
!?
WHERE IS KUCHIHA?!
HEY!
WAIT!!
TURN

SHE'S NOTHING BUT BONES NOW!
YOU'RE TOO LATE!
THE DOG...
OHH...
YES!
WE ATE HER!!!
OH...
OH YES, THE DOG...
JINGLE


.....WHAT?

RATTLE
THAT'S BE-CAUSE...
RATTLE

WE ATE THE DOG GOD!
WE ATE HER!!!
WE ATE HER RIGHT UP!!
GAH!!

UGH !!

!?
GLARE
DAAAMN, KANZOU, YOU'RE CRAZY..!!
BUT YOU ACTUAL-LY HIT IT!
SMEGSH

GAH
...
DON'T FUCK WITH ME, YOU BASTARDS
HEY... TELL ME...
WHERE IS KU-CHIHA?!
UGH
...
UGHH
...
THERE'S NO FUCKING WAY THAT TRASH LIKE YOU COULD KILL THE INUGAMI!
!...?
DUDE, CHILL OUT...
WHOA
...
STARE
KAN-ZOU!!
THAT WASN'T ITS REAL BODY!!

!!
!!
SHIT!
KAN-
ZOU!!

KAN-ZOU!!
THE KID!!
IT SWAL-LOWED HIM!!
IT'S ALL RIGHT!! MY ORIGAMI WILL PROTECT HIM AS LONG AS IT REACHES HIM IN TIME!!
I CAN SENSE HIM!!
I'LL SHOW YOU WHERE TO ATTACK!!
OKAY!!

GASP
THERE!!!
GAH!!
SHIT!

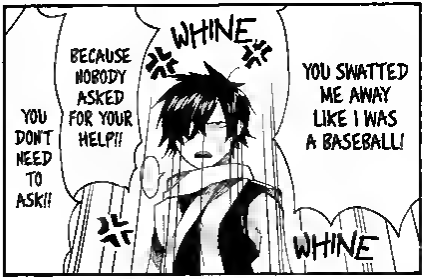
!
HEH.
!?
WAIT TSUYU-KUSA!!
THOSE CHAINS ARE PRETTY BRITTLE!
EH?!
I WANT TO HELP TOO!!
OH YEAH?

GAH !!
NO OO !!
cough
THUMP

crack
crack

T..
TSUYU-KUSA!!
SLAM
Gah!

RUN
RUN


WHINE
YOU SWATTED ME AWAY LIKE I WAS A BASEBALL!
BECAUSE NOBODY ASKED FOR YOUR HELP!!
YOU DON'T NEED TO ASK!!
WHINE

CRY
CRY

HMPH

!
!

!?
HEY.. WHERE'S TOKI?
GLANCE

I don't believe it...
THEY'RE... ACTUALLY WORKING TOGETHER..
AND THEY'RE STRONG ...
Well that's something you don't see every day
stare

KUCHI-HA...
tremble

TOKI?!

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by TAKAYAMA Shinobu

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CHAPTER 101
THE NIGHTINGALE THAT CALLS TO THE MOON, PART 4

WE GOB-BLED HER UP!!
KUCHI-HA.
TREMBLE
TOKI!
HEY!
SHOCK
PULL YOUR-SELF TOGETH-ER!
WHAT DO WE DO NOW, KON?
KUCHI-HA IS..

IT'S ALL MY FAULT ...!!
!!
BUT YOU CAN'T BELIEVE A THING THOSE GUYS SAY...
THAT'S RIGHT!
THEY MAY HAVE BEEN LYING...
....
Y..
YEAH --
LIFT

KON...
DON'T SAY IT IN SUCH A MISERABLE VOICE, IDIOT
OWW!!

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO...
IS BE-LIEVE
SO KUCHIHA IS GOING TO BE FINE.
YOU'VE GOT SOME KIND OF WEIRD POWER THAT MAKES IMPOSSIBLE THINGS HAPPEN IF YOU BELIEVE IN THEM HARD ENOUGH.

KON...

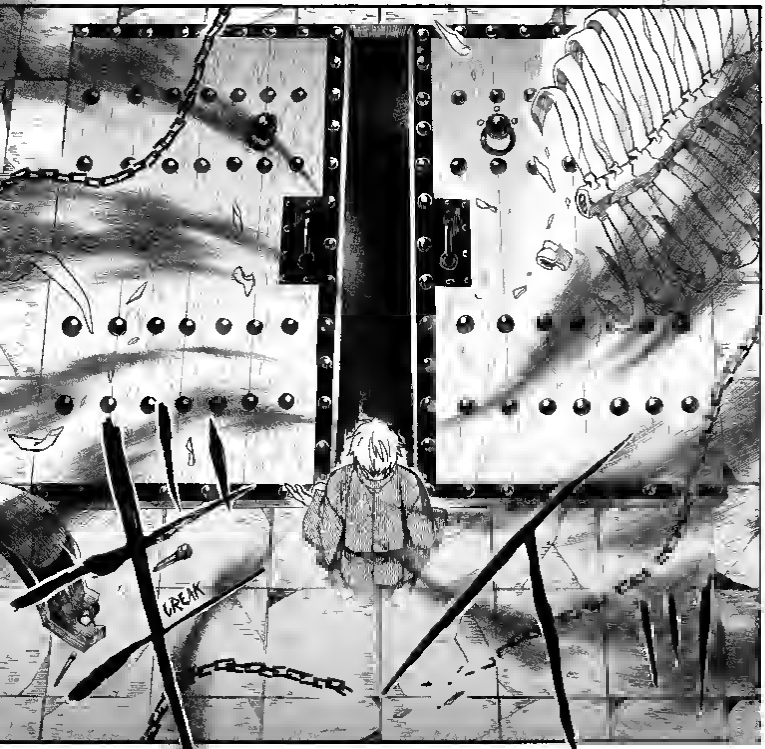
AND YOU'LL FIND A WAY.
YOU JUST NEED TO BELIEVE IN YOURSELF.
THAT'S RIGHT!
.....
A WAY...
TOKI?
キュッ!
THAT'S RIGHT!!

press
IF THAT SKELETON REALLY DID EAT HER...
THEN SHE MUST STILL BE INSIDE IT,
IF I CAN JUST...
COUGH
GAG
GET HER OUT..
I MEAN IT'S A SKELETON! IT COULDN'T POSSIBLY HAVE DIGESTED HER OR ANYTHING!
AT LEAST
I THINK SO!
MAN, THIS IS NEVER GOING TO WORK...

I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN DO THIS...
EVEN THOUGH I'VE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO BELIEVE IN MYSELF
BUT...
HIZAME-SAN TAUGHT ME HOW TO USE MY POWER
BONTEN TOLD ME A LOT ABOUT IT, TOO
I WAS ABLE TO SAVE TSUYUKUSA SOMEHOW
I WAS EVEN ABLE TO STAND UP TO KANZOU
AND KON...
KON BELIEVES IN ME
HE ALWAYS HAS.

Beni-san believes in me. Tsuruume-san believes in me. Sasaki-san, Heihachi-san, and Ginshu-san...! They all believe in me.
All I need now...
is to believe in myself.

EVERYONE HAS PUT THEIR FAITH IN ME...

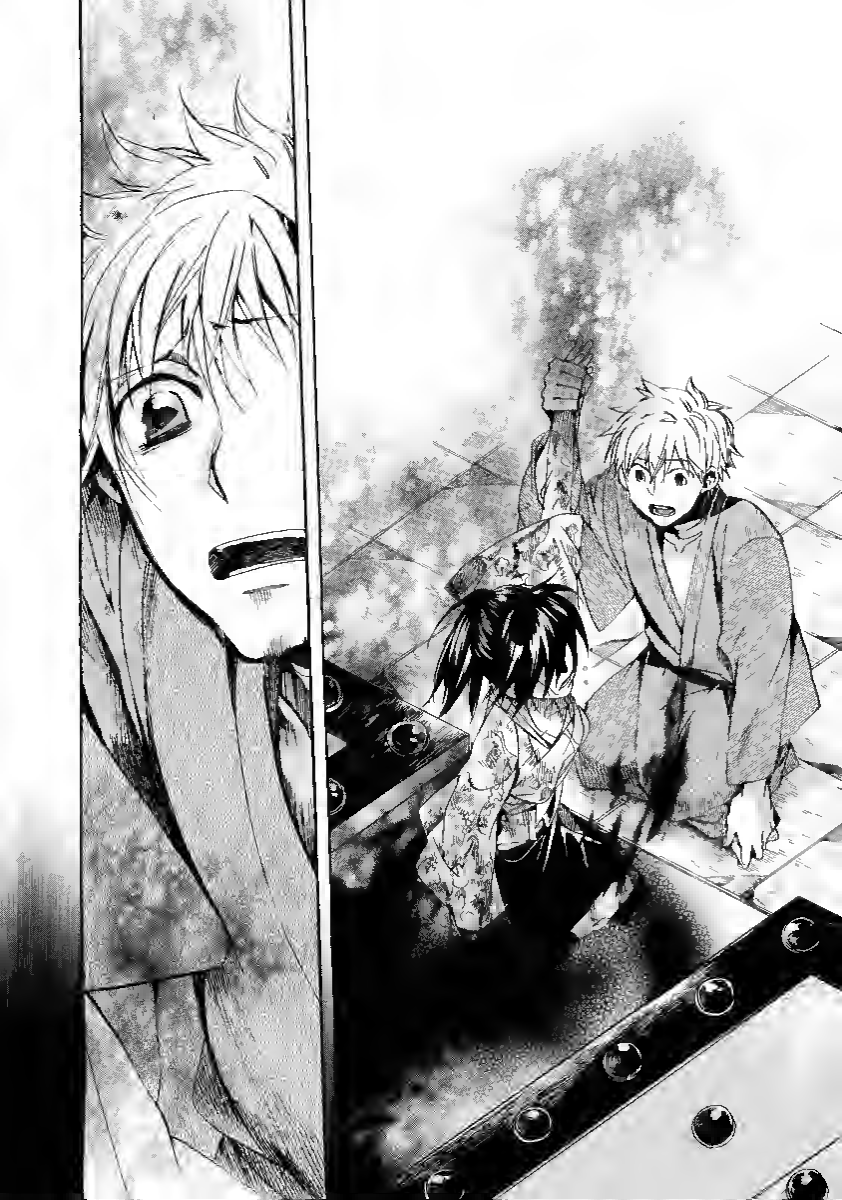


AND THAT'S MADE ME STRONGER.

But we need you.
We all need you.
KUCHI-HA!!
COME BACK!!
gulp
KUCHI-HA..
KUCHI-HA!
I need you.
EVEN IF -
EVEN IF THIS IS ALL I'M CAPABLE OF DOING
YOU'VE ALWAYS PROTECTED ME...
THIS TIME, I WANT TO PROTECT YOU!
It's only because I have your support...

THAT I'M ABLE TO STAND HERE NOW.
KUCHI-HA!
AH..
AH!
KUCHI-HA!
CRACKLE
Gah!!
CRACKLE
TAKE MY HAND!
THIS TIME
I WON'T LET GO!!

...HEY.
DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN YOU SAID..
THAT IF YOU SEE A DOPPEL-GANGER,
YOU'RE FATED TO DIE?
?
YOU WEREN'T JUST JOKING, WERE YOU?
_BECAUSE I MET THE REAL ME.
IS THIS THE END?
LEARNING HOW TO RELY ON OTHER PEOPLE.
"TRUST" MEANS...
I WANT TO PROTECT YOU!
BUT MAYBE..
HE RELIES ON "ME" MORE THAN HE SHOULD.



...WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG?
I'M STARVING

HE'S MADE ALL OF THESE DEEP BONDS
I KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO FEEL HELPLESS AND ALONE.
POP
HE'S AN IDIOT WITH NO SELF-AWARENESS. AND YET.
BUT I COULD HEAR YOU CALLING ME...
...IT WAS SO DARK...
JUST WHEN I'D GIVEN UP HOPE, I HEARD YOU...
I KNOW..
I KNOW YOUR LIFE HAS BEEN HARD AND PAINFUL...
YEAH...
BUT I PROMISE, FROM NOW ON, EVERY-THING WILL BE OKAY
IT'S BECAUSE...
I MET YOU...
THAT I...
OKAY...

I'M SORRY..
AND... I THANK YOU, KUCHIHA.
EVEN WHEN..
THINGS GOT OVER-WHELMING.
YEAH...
THAT I'VE BEEN ABLE...
TO KEEP MY EYES OPEN

I THINK HE'LL BE OKAY EVEN IF I DISAPPEAR.
I'M NOTHING SPECIAL BUT, I MEAN, IT'S NOT LIKE I WANT TO DIE OR ANYTHING
IT'S JUST THAT...
I'M HAPPY THAT I'VE BEEN ABLE TO HELP HIM.
AND THAT'S ...
ALL I WANT.

THAT'S ALL I NEED.

WAH, THIS PLACE IS KIND OF CREEPY.
!
haha
THAT GOES WITHOUT SAYING.
BUT WE NEED TO REST.
THIS IS WHERE THE SOLDIERS MADE THEIR LAST STAND DURING THE BATTLE OF UENO...
BUT REMEMBER THAT WE ARE NO DEFEATED ARMY.
KUCHI-HA...
SORRY!
IS SHE GOING TO BE OKAY?

SHE'S JUST EXHAUSTED.
SHE JUST NEEDS REST.
KANZOU, WOULD YOU MIND WATCHING HER FOR A MOMENT?
NOD
KON?
SLIDE
HUH?
ARE YOU SURE IT'S OKAY FOR YOU TO LEAVE?

OKAY
...YEAH. UM, I...
I JUST WANTED ...
TO SEE YOU.
TOKI!
BONTEN'S LOOKING FOR YOU!
BON-TEN?
LOOK UP THERE.
EH!?

WHAT IS THAT..?
...
GINSHU-SAN...!?
IS THAT YOU...?
IT'S...
flutter
YES.
WE ARE HERE.

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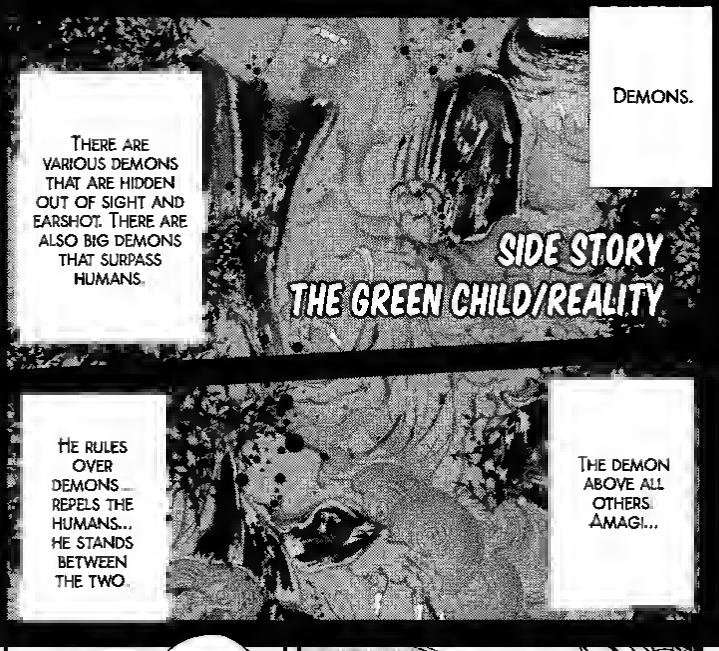

DEMONS.
THERE ARE VARIOUS DEMONS THAT ARE HIDDEN OUT OF SIGHT AND EARSHOT. THERE ARE ALSO BIG DEMONS THAT SURPASS HUMANS.
SIDE STORY
THE GREEN CHILD/REALITY
HE RULES OVER DEMONS... REPELS THE HUMANS... HE STANDS BETWEEN THE TWO.
THE DEMON ABOVE ALL OTHERS. AMAGI...
AMAGI, AMAGI, HUH
SUCH A BIG NAME BUT HE'S REALLY JUST A HANDYMAN WHO DOES EVERYTHING.
WWW
IS THAT SO?
IN THE CAPITAL, YOU NEED TO MEDIATE THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN DEMONS AND HUMANS THAT'S A BIG RESPONSI-BILITY

SIMPLE-TON.
HUH?
JUST MAKE ALL THE HUMANS.. DISAPPEAR WITHOUT A TRACE.
CHE!
BEFORE THE UNWRITTEN PAGE INTERVENED BETWEEN THOSE TWO...
STOP SQUABBLING YOU TWO!
JUST STOP JOKING!
DON'T MESS AROUND.
WHAT DID YOU SAY? SAY IT TO MY FACE!
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THESE BROTHERS WAS VERY BAD.

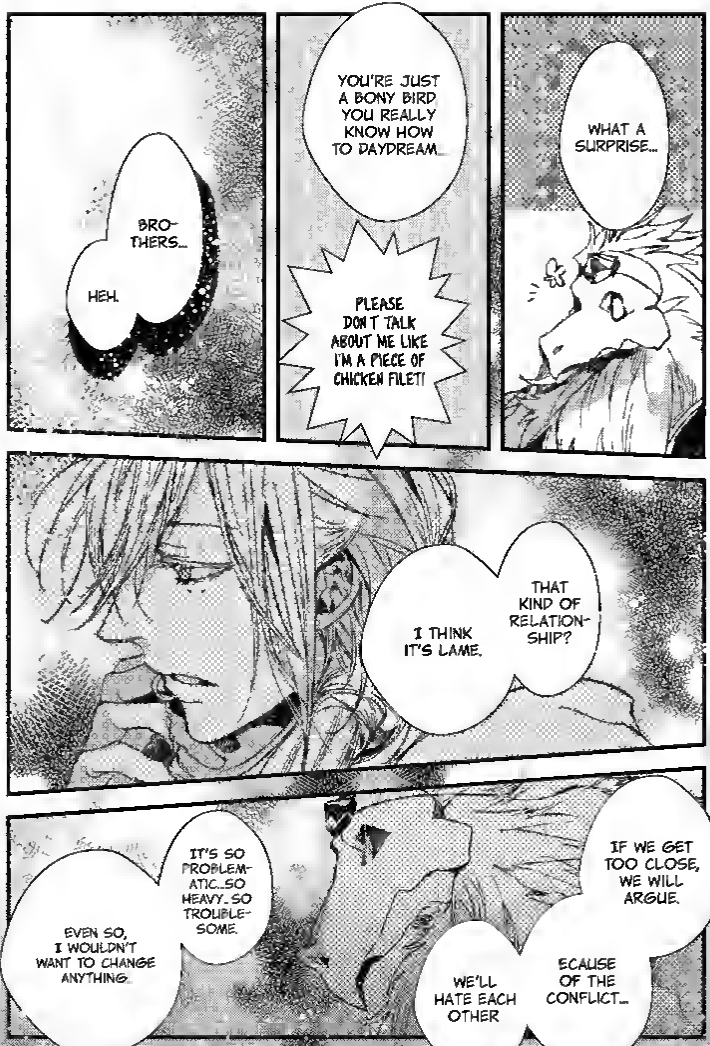
I HEARD THAT TSUYUKUSA AND OTHERS ONCE LIVED IN THE FOREST
SO I UNDERSTOOD TSUYUKUSA'S BEHAVIOR.
I HATE THE FOREST
I UNCONSCIOUSLY ASKED WHY HE LIVED IN HUMAN VILLAGES...
HE REPLIED AS SUCH...
TSUYUKUSA, WHO DISLIKED PEOPLE, DID NOT LIKE LIVING IN POPULATED VILLAGES...
HE PASSED HIS TIME ON ANIMAL TRAILS AND IN THE FOREST.
WHEN I WAS BORN INTO THIS WORLD AS A BIRD DEMON...
BON, BEING BON, BUILT A PLACE TO LIVE IN THE TOWN OF EDO

AH...
THAT FOREST REALLY HAS SOME TROUBLESOME GODS_..
BUT EVEN SO, IN TOWN THERE ARE ALSO THE TOWN'S "TROUBLES"

THERE ARE OFTEN ENCOUNTERS WITH PEOPLE FROM THE [OHMYOU BUREAU].

VERY AMUSING, UTSUBUSHI.
YOU SAID... TSUYUKUSA AND I ARE BROTHERS, SO WE NEED TO GET ALONG...?
LIKE THE PROBLEMS BETWEEN TSUYUKUSA AND I ARE INCREASING, DID YOU REALLY NOT NOTICE?
..YES THE PROBLEMS BETWEEN DEMONS AND HUMANS KEEP INCREASING..
WE NEED TO HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF UNITY NOW— RIGHT?
BUT LATELY THE PROBLEMS WITH THE [OHMYOU BUREAU] KEEP GETTING WORSE

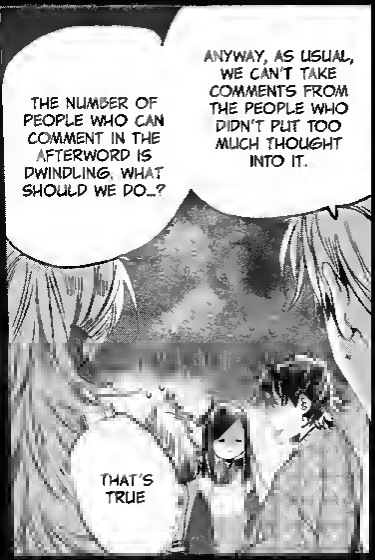
IF YOU WANT TO REPAIR THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN US, YOU SHOULDN'T TALK TO ME.
YOU SHOULD GO LECTURE THAT IDIOT
.....
sigh-
REALLY NOW...
BOTH OF YOU BROTHERS ARE SO SIMILAR
HUH?
I'M TELLING YOU, UTSU-BUSHI.
THAT THING AND I ARE JUST COINCIDENTALLY PROTECTED BY THE SAME DEMON IN THE SAME TIME PERIOD...
THERE'S ALSO THE TIE OF BLOOD AND ORIGINS FROM THE SAME PLACE...
BON.
EVEN IF THAT'S IN THE PAST...
I THINK RIGHT NOW PEOPLE CAN RELATE TO YOU.
IF A PERSON CAN MAKE YOU FEEL LIKE BEING PART OF A FAMILY...
AFTER A WHILE...
THOSE TIES DON'T MATTER.
.....


BRO-
THERS...
HEH.
YOU'RE JUST A BONY BIRD YOU REALLY KNOW HOW TO DAYDREAM...
PLEASE DON'T TALK ABOUT ME LIKE I'M A PIECE OF CHICKEN FILET!
WHAT A SURPRISE...
THAT KIND OF RELATION-SHIP?
I THINK IT'S LAME.
IF WE GET TOO CLOSE, WE WILL ARGUE.
BECAUSE OF THE CONFLICT...
WE'LL HATE EACH OTHER
IT'S SO PROBLEM-ATIC...SO HEAVY...SO TROUBLE-SOME.
EVEN SO, I WOULDN'T WANT TO CHANGE ANYTHING.

WELL...
IT'S LIKE THIS, RIGHT...
EVEN IF THERE'S NO BLOOD TIES.
AS LONG AS THERE ARE BONDS FROM EMOTIONS.
"AS LONG AS THERE'S "WATCHING OVER YOU"...
HIDDEN DEEP...
WITHIN MY HEART
End

PR NOTE: LITERALLY, "AFTER THE FESTIVAL."

WOULDN'T IT BE NICE, IF THEY COULD READ VOLUME 3 AND WHATNOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND?!
FOR THE KIDS WHO READ THE AFTERWORD FIRST, YOU BETTER NOT LOOK NEXT TIME!!
THERE YOU HAVE IT!! THIS WAS A VOLUME FULL OF ALL SORTS OF SPOILERS!!


THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO CAN COMMENT IN THE AFTERWORD IS DWINDLING. WHAT SHOULD WE DO...?
ANYWAY, AS USUAL, WE CAN'T TAKE COMMENTS FROM THE PEOPLE WHO DIDN'T PUT TOO MUCH THOUGHT INTO IT.
THAT'S TRUE

2013.JAN. Thankyou!

ZENI-SUM
SERIES

あまつき

16

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